Gc
929.2
M42526c
2007184

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 01410 9752

BRIEF MEMORIALS

OF

THE REV. B. W. MATHIAS,

LATE CHAPLAIN OF

BETHESDA CHAPEL.

DUBLIN
WILLIAM CURRY, JUN. AND COMPANY,
LONGMAN, BROWN, AND CO. LONDON.
1842.

78 6116 17

2C 7184

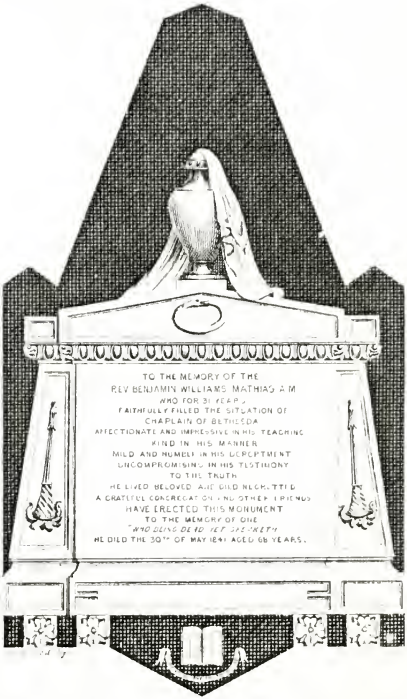
Curry, William Dublin
Memorials of Rev. B.W. Mathias,
late chaplain of Bethesda Chapel

Palm Beach

Wades Extracts

Rev. B. W. Mathias was the great-great grandfather of Edward Francis Nash, through his paternal grandmother, Mary Staples Mathias Nash.

This book given me by Mrs. F. Isabel Mathias of Peterborough, Ont. Canada, Nov. 1944.


TO THE MEMORY OF THE
REV BENJAMIN WILLIAMS MATHIAS A M
WHO FOR 31 YEARS
FAITHFULLY FILLED THE SITUATION OF
CHAPLAIN OF BETHESDA
AFFECTIONATE AND IMPRESSIVE IN HIS TEACHING
KIND IN HIS MANNER
MILD AND HUMBLE IN HIS DEPORTMENT
UNCOMPROMISING IN HIS TESTIMONY
TO THE TRUTH
HE LIVED BELOVED AND DIED LAMENTED
A GRATEFUL CONGREGATION AND OTHER FRIENDS
HAVE ERECTED THIS MONUMENT
TO THE MEMORY OF ONE
"WHO BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH"
HE DIED THE 30TH OF MAY 1841 AGED 66 YEARS.

920.7
13

DUBLIN
PRINTED BY J. S. FOLDS, SON, AND PATTON,
5, Bachelor's-walk.

SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES.

	No. of Copies.
Ardagh, Very Rev. Dean of	6
Apjohn, Mr. Henry, Blackrock	1
Armstrong, J. Tew, Esq.	1
Armstrong, Rev. Charles, Nottingham	1
Atkinson, Mrs. Ahaseragh	1
Auchenleck, Mrs. Dominick-street	1
Barklie, Miss	1
Bailey, Henry R. Esq. Dominick-street	1
Bailey, James E. Esq. Kilgobbin	1
Ball, Edmund, Esq.	1
Beilby, Dr. Edinburgh	2
Berry, Mrs. Cottage, Drumeree	1
Beatty, Edmund, Esq.	1
Bentley, Robert, Esq. Peter-street	1
Bell, Mrs. Gardiner-street, upper	1
Bickerstaff, L. Esq.	1
Blackiston, Matthew, Esq.	1
Black, Rev. Gibson, Mountjoy-street	1
Blood, Mrs. Anglesey-place, Kingstown	1
Boileau, Simeon, Esq. Woodview, Stillorgan	1
Bonynge, Wm. Esq. Henrietta-street	1
Briscoe, F. Esq. Mountjoy-street	1
Brooke, William, Esq. Leeson-street	1
Butler, Mr. Mount-Merrion	1
Byrne, P. Esq. Peafield	1

	No. of Copies.
Clancarty, Countess of	2
Clancarty, Dowager Countess of	4
Coddington, Mrs. Rutland-square	1
Coddington, Miss, Rutland-square	1
Connor, John, Esq.	1
Connor, Edward, Esq. Summer-hill	1
Crawford, Major, Crescent, Marino	1
Crawford, Andrew, Esq. 9, upper Sackville-street	1
Crossle, Rev. Charles	1
Crossle, Mrs.	1
De Grey, The Countess, Dublin Castle	4
Derry, Lord Bishop of	4
Derry, Ven. the Archdeacon of	1
Darley, Rev. John, Dungannon	1
Darley, Wm. Esq. Baggot-street	1
Daly, R. Esq. Kingstown	1
Debutts, Rev. George, 2 Wellington-pl. up. Leeson-st.	2
Devereux, Rev. N. Cremorne cottage, Cootehill	1
Disney, Mrs. Somerset	1
Dobbs, C. Esq. Castle-Dobbs	1
Dunlevie, Miss, 4, Russell-place	1
English, William, Esq. Farmley, Castleknock	1
English, Mrs. Farmley, Castleknock	1
English, Miss, Farmley, Castleknock	1
English, William, Esq. jun. Farmley, Castleknock	
English, John, Esq. Farmley, Castleknock	1
English, Thomas, Esq. Farmley, Castleknoc	1
Farrer, Rev. George	1
Field, Mrs. Ulceby Grange, Lincolnshire	1
Foote, Simon, Esq.	1
Fowler, Robert, Esq. Merrion-square	1
Fowler, Rev. Luke, Kilkenny	1
French, Rev. Edward	1
Frew, Rev. J. J. Harcourt-terrace	1

	No. of Copies.
Gardiner, Hon. Miss	1
Geoghegan, Charles, Esq. Henrietta-street	1
Gibbons, James, Esq. Ballynagall	1
Gibbons, Mrs. Ballynagall	1
Gibbons, Mrs. jun. Ballynagall	1
Goold, Thomas, Esq. Merrion-square	1
Graves, Rev. Dr. Mitchelstown	1
Graves, Miss, Mitchelstown	1
Gray, George, Esq. Linenhall-street	1
Grey, Mrs.	1
Gregg, Rev. John, Trinity Church	6
Gregg, Rev. F. T. Ballymahon	1
Guinness, Arthur, Esq. Beaumont	10
Hall, Rev. John, Clifton, Bristol	6
Hanna, William, Esq. Gardiner's Place	1
Hanna, Dr. Hardwicke-street	1
Hanna, William, Esq. Carysfort avenue	1
Hewitt, Hon. and Rev. J.	1
Herron, W. B. Esq. 6, Lower Sackville-street	1
Hillas, Mrs. Dorset-street	1
Homan, Rev. John, Santry	1
Hunt, Charles, Esq. Manor house, Tanderagee	1
Hudson, Rev. A. Longford	1
Hudson, Mrs. Longford	1
Hume, Rev. Robert, Urney	1
Johnston, Joseph, Esq. Glenard	1
Johnston, Miss, Nappa house	1
Johnston, Mrs.	1
Johnston, Mrs. Percy-place	1
Johns, Alexander, Esq. Carrickfergus	2
Kearney, Mrs. Merrion-avenue	1
Kearney, Rev. P. N. Peafield house	1
Kearney, Mrs. Peafield house	1
Kearney, Rev. M. Caledon	1

	No. of Copies.
Kearney, James, Esq. Merrion avenue	1
Kelly, Rev. Thomas, Pembroke road	1
Kirkpatrick, Rev. G. Ballymena	1
Kiernan, Miss S. Drumcondra	1
Knox, Rev. J. S. Maghera	5
Lincoln, the Lord Bishop of	2
Latouche, D. C. Esq.	2
Latouche, Robert, Esq.	2
Latouche, W. Digges, Esq.	2
Lanauze, Mrs. Herbert house	4
Leathley, Rev. J. F.	1
Leathley, Miss, Granard	1
Lindsay, Rev. Thomas	2
Livingston, William, Esq. Westport	1
Litton, Edward, Esq. M.P. North Great George's-st.	4
Low, Nathaniel, Esq.	1
Mayne, Mrs. J. 55 Baggot-street	1
Mecredy, W. H. Esq. Summer-hill	1
Mecredy, R. D. Esq. Fitzgibbon-street	1
M'Creight, Rev. Andrew, Belturbet	1
Miller, Rev. Alexander	1
Miller, Rowley, Esq.	1
Miller, Thomas, Esq.	1
Minchin, Rev. Augustus, Kilrea	2
M'Master, M. Esq. Grafton-street	1
Mollan, Mrs. Gloucester-street	1
Motherwell, Rev. M. C.	1
Mulvany, Thomas, Esq. Gotha cottage	1
Murray, Mrs. Edgeworthstown	6
Murray, Rev. Hugh, Athlone	1
Murray, G. S. Esq.	1
Napper, Rev. William	1
Neville, Lady	1
Neville, Edward, Esq. M.D.	2

	No. of Copies.
Newton, Andrew, Esq. Dame-street	1
Newcome, William, Esq. Baggot-street	1
Nixon, Rev. R. H. Marino, Merrion avenue	1
Nixon, Rev. Edward	1
Oliver, Colonel R.A. Ballincollig	4
Oliver, Mrs. Ballincollig	4
Ormsby, Henry, Esq. 17 Rutland-street	1
Ormsby, Mrs. Waltham terrace	1
Orr, Mrs. Andrew, Milburn	1
Orr, Miss Anne, Milburn	1
Ottiwell, William, Esq.	1
Pomfret, Countess, London	6
Parnell, Thomas, Esq. 25 Merrion-square, north	4
Phelps, Miss Louisa, 92 Capel-street	1
Pomeroy, Hon. and Rev. A.	1
Pounden, Rev. P. Westport	2
Pounden, Mrs. Westport	2
Price, Mrs. Carrickfergus	1
Richardson, J. A. Esq. 19 upper Dominick-street	1
Richardson, Charles, Esq	1
Ross, Rev. Alexander	1
Ross, Rev. William	1
Ross, Mrs. David	1
Rogers, Andrew, Esq. Baggot-street	1
Rogers, Andrew, Esq. jun.	1
Russell, Newcome, Esq.	1
Scott, Ralph, Esq. 19 Dominick-street	1
Scott, Rev. George	1
Simms, Mrs. Tinnehely	1
Singer, P. E. Esq.	4
Smyth, Mrs.	1
Smith, E. J. Esq.	1
Smith, Rev. William, Molyneux Asylum	1
Stanford, Rev. C. S. Glasnevin	1

	No. of Copies.
Stewart, Rev. Hamilton, Buncrana	1
Stewart, Mrs. Percy-place	1
Swift, John, Esq. sen. 13 upper Leeson-street	4
Swift, Robert, Esq. 16 Percy-place	1
Thwaites, Miss, Sackville-street	2
Thorpe, Rev. Dr. London	6
Thompson, John, Esq. Dorset-street	1
Tims, R. M. Esq. Grafton-street	2
Tighe, R. P. Esq. Gardiner-street	1
Tomb, Miss	1
Wade, B. Esq. Amiens street	1
Walker, Rev. J. A.	1
Wahab, General, Waltham terrace	2
Wahab, Mrs. Waltham terrace	2
Warren, Sergeant	1
Wallace, Miss	1
Waddy, Rev. Richard	1
Waddy, Miss Jane	1
Webber, Rev. Thomas, Castlemacadam	1
Whitestone, Mrs. Frederick-street	12
Wingfield, Hon. and Rev. William	1

PREFACE.

I HAVE been requested to write a few lines as a preface to the "brief memorials" of my excellent friend, whom I loved and valued while living, and whose memory is dear to me now that he is removed. I cannot hesitate to do any thing which would mark the unfeigned respect with which I contemplate his character—any thing which would associate me with his recollection. Of himself personally I knew much:—of his history previous to his coming to Dublin, or of the incidents connected with his settlement, or the struggles consequent on his removal, I know nothing, nor even of the details of family arrangements which are touched on in

the narrative. It was as a minister of the Gospel, as a public preacher of the word, as the evangelist who with power and effect declared the riches of salvation, that I was acquainted with the subject of this little history; and for the accuracy of the statements contained in it, for all the facts regarding himself and others, as well as for the execution of the original design, those who feel interested in it are indebted in no degree to the writer of these lines, but solely to the members of his family, who were naturally anxious that one so loved, respected, and valued, should not pass from this world without leaving a memorial behind of what he did and what he was. The best and most lasting memorial is, indeed, to be found in the progress of religion in the country, to which he, through the divine blessing, mainly contributed; but it was due to one who had so large a share in its revival and extension among us, that a narrative of his personal history should remain. It is matter

of deep regret that, in the absence of incident, the compilers of this little memoir have not been able to give a more detailed view of the intellectual life of its subject; but Mr. Mathias confined his exertions very much to the pulpit, of which, while the results are engraven on the religious character of the time, the instruments he made use of—his words, his actions, his voice—now scarcely live, but in recollection. It is to be much regretted too that but a very small portion of his correspondence has been preserved. He was not fond of letter-writing, and seldom indulged in it; and it is to a similar cause that we may ascribe the small number of works he gave to the press. Having habituated himself in early life to unpremeditated, though not unprepared oratory, the restraints of writing seemed to him like trammels, which he disliked to wear. I would add, too, the impression made upon my own mind by my revered friend; and if my observation be just, it will account equally for his disinclina-

tion to write and to publish. Mr. Mathias was constitutionally timid, retiring, and modest: he entertained of himself an opinion low in proportion to the high estimate he formed of the work to which he had been called, and he shrunk from any exhibition to which duty did not imperiously call him. Hence the strongly contrasted style of his conversation in mixed society, with his bold and open manner in the pulpit: his natural temperament was exhibited in the former, but it was overcome by the strong sense of duty when he appeared as the ambassador of the King of kings. Even when he advocated the cause of the institutions nearest to his heart—of the Bible or Missionary Societies—on the platform, I have been induced to think that he had forced himself to overcome his natural inclinations, and that his wishes would have been gratified by being allowed to witness in privacy the exertions of others. In conversation, Mr. Mathias—though in private uniformly cheer-

ful, and even playful, as well as instructive—was not known or appreciated in general or mixed circles: it was with his familiar friends, or in the bosom of his family, that he was seen indulging the full freedom of unreserved intimacy, and mingling together the "grave and gay," and pouring forth from the fulness of a well-stored mind what could divert, interest, and inform. It may not, perhaps, be generally known, that humour of a very decided character was one of the qualities of Mr. Mathias's mind; and the success with which he has occasionally on the platform and in conversation wielded that fascinating but dangerous weapon, both evinced how great a master he might have been of that power; and proved the strong sense of duty under which, with the divine blessing, he opposed the habitual use of a quality which, seductive in itself, might easily be carried beyond what he justly deemed the strict decorum of the chastened and moderated character of the Christian ministry. But for the

records of such conversations it is not to those who most frequently enjoy them we are to look. Familiarized to them by habit, and relying upon memory, the intimates permit them to pass without any attempt at fixing their results, until the power of doing so is removed, and the weakness of memory is proved by the inefficient attempt at recalling what was once so vividly impressed. The authors of "the brief memorials" have experienced this, and have been able to recover but a few fragments of those conversations which had for so many years been the source of delight and instruction to the domestic circle.

To one circumstance I cannot but advert. The state of religious feeling in the church has undergone a very decided change since the subject of these "brief memorials" was permitted to perform a part in its ministrations;—a far greater degree of strictness with regard to the external form of the church prevails than

7184

formerly, and the line of separation between churchmen and dissenters is far more strongly marked than before. A churchman of the present day will smile or sigh over the proofs of low churchmanship, even in high places, which this little volume contains, according as he regards the strict maintenance of the distinction essential or not to the well-being of the church. To deny that some of the anecdotes mark more irregularity in churchmen than is desirable, would be impossible; but we think that a candid reader will readily suggest to himself excuses for the conduct to which he would for himself object. The character of the religion in the Established Church at that time was not high; and those who valued her for her formularies and her doctrines, finding little sympathy within her walls, looked beyond them for those who were like-minded; while discipline, it must be confessed, was relaxed, and when enforced, was directed rather against doctrines that were thought enthusiastical or Cal-

vinistic, than against practices that confounded the distinction between dissenters and churchmen. A desirable change has taken place, which marks with sufficient distinctness the characteristics of churchmen and dissenters; but whether there is not a tendency to go beyond the line of strict propriety, and in the assertion of church, to forget gospel principles, this is not the place to discuss. The subject of this memoir was a churchman in the best sense of the word; having a decided preference for the spiritual character of the church—for its formularies, its creeds, its discipline—his love for her was fervent, though not exclusive, and was grounded upon a knowledge of her real qualities and usefulness. High as was his veneration for her, he did not set her in the place of the Redeemer, nor give to her decrees the importance of the dicta of the word of God, nor place her external ordinances instead of internal religion, or give to her sacraments the office which belongs only to the Saviour's

blood and righteousness. He loved her, but he did not deny the character of Christian to all who were beyond her pale, or leave them to the "uncovenanted mercies" of God; and while he held that episcopacy, as it is in our church, is the nearest approach to the apostolic model, and rejoiced in a form of government which would have commended itself to his judgment, even if it had wanted scriptural authority, he limited not the presence or the mercy of God to those who enjoyed with him that inestimable privilege. I am aware that such views may be regarded by many churchmen of the present day as low, and Erastian, and bordering on dissent; but in Mr. Mathias's case they were derived from a careful study of the written word, and of the writings of the fathers of our Reformation; and I hesitate not to say, that when the present fever of religious disputation passes away, they will be found most in conformity with the spirit and the truth of our religion. It must be, at all events, admitted,

that Mr. Mathias's affection for the church was disinterested. Except for the time he was a curate in the country, he passed his life in her service, and devoted to her his energy and his talents, without sharing her emoluments or enjoying her honours. Nay, he preserved his allegiance to her in spite of the formal ban under which he was placed by his ecclesiastical superiors. When inhibited* in the diocese of Dublin, he continued the same services that he had carried on, obeying implicitly the direction of the archbishop, and never, by the slightest act or word, manifesting impatience under the uncalled-for severity with which *he* must have felt himself treated.

* As a singular but decisive proof that the inhibition was directed not against any supposed irregularity in Mr. Mathias's ministrations, but against the Calvinism he was supposed to preach, it may be mentioned that the respected prelate who prevented him preaching in any of the churches in the diocese, had been in the habit, almost up to the time of the inhibition, of attending Mr. Mathias's preaching in Bethesda. The inhibition was taken off, as mentioned in the life, by Archbishop Magee, who licensed Mr. Mathias.

I confess I have sometimes thought, that it would have reflected no obloquy on the Established Church, or those who have the distribution of its patronage, if the latter days of Mathias had been cheered by some mark of favour from that church to whose interests he had devoted his life and energies. I am quite aware, that in the crowd of deserving claimants, many must be overlooked; and I know, too, that Mr. Mathias never expressed —I believe, never felt—disappointment or surprise that he was not remembered by many who yet attended and enjoyed his ministrations: but still his friends, and the friends of the interests of the Establishment, cannot avoid feeling regret that so eminent and useful a servant of religion should have been left to the voluntary contributions of a grateful public, unnoticed and unrewarded by the church he had loved and served.

In doctrine, Mr. Mathias was what is gene-

rally understood by *a moderate Calvinist*; differing in opinion from the eminent reformer from whom that name has been taken on some of those points on which it may be said he will be found to have differed* from himself. He held the doctrines of divine grace as set forth in our articles and homilies, without reservation or evasion; and he held them, too, not as subjects of speculation or reasoning, but as practical, influential principles—as the means used by the Spirit of God to renew the soul to holiness. His preaching was eminently practical; and while he never shunned the avowal of the truths which he held, he always pointed to the true and legitimate result—a meek and holy life. I have called him a *moderate* Calvinist; for while he maintained firmly and fully the election to eternal life,

* The reader of Calvin's Commentaries will find it hard to reconcile the opinions expressed in them, particularly on the subject of universal redemption, with the earlier sentiments of the Institutes.

and the preservation of God's people "by faith unto salvation," he believed, too, that Jesus Christ suffered death upon the cross for all men, and rejected, as unscriptural and inconsistent, the dogma of reprobation. But it was not his wont to employ his pulpit exercises on subjects of mere discussion. The affectionate appeal—the magnifying the Saviour's love—the setting forth the condescending mercy of God—the exhibition of the sinner's hope—these were the themes on which he loved to dwell; and it was to the power with which, in enforcing them, he pursued the self-righteousness of the sinner and the deceitfulness of sin to the last recesses of the heart, that Mathias owed the blessing which attended on his ministry; by this he produced so striking an effect on the religion of his country and his time.

This brief recommendation of this little

volume I would terminate by observing, that it was unavoidable in such a narrative to allude more or less pointedly to scenes in which individuals were concerned, who may not have passed away, or whose relatives may still survive. It is hoped that nothing that can have a tendency to produce even a passing emotion of dissatisfaction in the bosom of any one will be *found in this memoir*. I know that such is the wish of the compilers, and that it would be to them a cause of sincere regret if they believed that any such feeling could be experienced. It was in this spirit, I do believe, the amiable subject of the memoir would desire his life to be recorded; and the authors would be indeed unwilling that a single expression should be found in its pages that, if submitted to his eye, would meet with his censure. He is now far beyond the reach of the censure or the praise of this world, and rests with Him whose glory he laboured to

advance; but the compilers hope that the slight memorial domestic feeling has erected to his memory, may not be without its use in preserving the recollection of a meek and lowly, yet honoured servant of the Lord.

J. H. S.

Trinity College, Jan. 1842.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Parentage and birth of the subject of this memoir—Death of his parents—His guardian and preceptors—Early desire to enter the ministry—Undecided whether to join the Church of England or of Scotland—Determined to investigate the subject—Early love of reading—In college—His character there—His tutor—Letter from his tutor—Meeting for reading the Scriptures in college—Letter from the Rev. Samuel Pearce—Extract from another letter 1

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Mathias receives ordination—Happy in his rector—Preaching acceptable—Establishes Sunday schools in the parish—Sets on foot clerical meetings—Invited to preach in a meeting-house—Bishop of Dromore's letter on the subject—Meeting of young men in college for studying the Scriptures, encouraged by the Rev. J. Walker, F.T.C.D.—Mr. Mathias joins with his former tutor in supporting the "Evangelical Society"—Extracts from letters of Mr. Walker—Mr. Mathias invited to lecture at Willmont—State of religion in that neighbourhood—Benefits of his preaching there—Two instances given—The honest miller . . . 21

CHAPTER III.

PAGE

Mr. Walker applies to Mr. Mathias to take his place at Bethesda—He goes to Dublin—Extract of a letter from Mr. Walker—Extracts of letters from Mr. Mathias—His remarks on Death and Infidelity—He establishes cottage lectures—Summer evening field lectures—His health suffers—Invited to Willmont—His conversation greatly blessed . . . 59

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Mathias marries—Continues still as curate to Mr. Tighe—Religious changes in Dublin—Mr. Walker's letter announcing his separation from the Establishment—Mr. Mathias's answer—Receives a letter from a friend in Dublin on the subject—Correspondence between Mr. Mathias and Mr. Walker continued 89

CHAPTER V.

Anxiety of Mr. Mathias respecting the state of religion in Dublin—Feels particularly for Bethesda—Second letter from his friend—Placed in a trying situation—Accepts an invitation to Dublin—Extract of a letter from his friend—Correspondence between Mr. Mathias and Mr. Walker resumed—Arrives in Dublin—Letters from Mr. Walker—Mr. Walker visits his former pupil 108

CHAPTER VI.

Sermon for the Female Orphan School at Bethesda—Smallness of the congregation at Bethesda at first—Mr. Mathias returns to the country to arrange his affairs—Grief of the parishioners at his departure—He has new difficulties to encounter—The Hibernian Bible Society established—Congregation increases at Bethesda—Instances of the benefit of Mr. Mathias's preaching—Members of the Church of Rome avail themselves of his instructions—Priest K.—Mr. Mathias preaches in London—His preaching *extempore*—An instance of its great benefit—Method of preparing his sermons—His visits to the sick and dying in general much blest—An instance of this 141

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE

Different religious societies established in Dublin—Mr. Mathias receives pupils—His instructions blest to some of them—A letter from one—Extract from the "pastoral annals"—Opposition made to his doctrines—Inhibition—Kindness of a clergyman—Taken ill in Bethesda—Visits Cheltenham—Much benefitted by it—Illness and death of his daughter—Unkindness shown to him—Anonymous letter—Attacked by paralysis—Conversation with his family—Goes to the country—Recommences preaching—Second attack of paralysis—Finally gives up preaching—Seized with a new illness—Goes to reside in the country—Materially benefitted by the change—His love and gratitude conspicuous—Attacked by influenza—Threatened with paralysis—Unable to attend church—Extract from a letter of Rev. Dr. Payson—His last illness—Death . 219

CHAPTER VIII.

Character by the Rev. Hugh White—Extract from a letter—A tribute to departed worth—Lines on hearing of the death of the Rev. B. W. Mathias—Brief account of A. M. S. Mathias. 263

BRIEF MEMORIALS.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage and birth of the subject of this memoir—Death of his parents—His guardian and preceptors—Early desire to enter the ministry—Undecided whether to join the Church of England or of Scotland—Determined to investigate the subject—Early love of reading—In college—His character there—His tutor—Letter from his tutor—Meeting for reading the Scriptures in college—Letter from the Rev. Samuel Pearce—Extract from another letter.

The late Reverend Benjamin Williams Mathias was the only surviving child of Mr. Benjamin Mathias, who was a native of Wales, and the younger son of a respectable family, still residing in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. Having been left, as many younger sons are, without the means of independence, he was induced, about the year 1760, to settle in Dublin, in the hope

of improving his fortune. The manufacture of woollen cloth was then carried on extensively in the Liberties of Dublin; and Mr. Mathias embarked in that business with every prospect of realizing a very good property, as many others have done who are now among the opulent of the city. He married a very amiable lady, and had several children, all of whom died in early childhood, with the exception of the subject of this memoir.

Mr. Mathias was a man of highly honourable principles and very public spirit; he fell a victim to real patriotism and the love of justice. When the old Volunteers during the American war took so active a part in the defence of their country from foreign invasion and domestic foes, he joined them, and was always among the foremost in every service of danger. The mountains near Dublin were greatly infested by robbers; there were neither military nor police to

keep them in awe, and he was frequently engaged whole nights in pursuing the banditti; this service necessarily exposed him to great fatigue. In consequence of remaining in the wet and cold, he was seized with an illness which brought on inflammation and mortification in his foot. This caused his death when he was only about thirty-five years of age; and the shock which his wife received, soon hurried her into a premature grave, as she had always been a most sensitive and nervous woman. Thus in a few weeks the young Benjamin was deprived of both his parents. But although he was little more than ten years old when his father died, he retained a lively impression of the Christian instructions he had received from him, and of the prayers he had offered up in his behalf. He has often spoken of the kindness of his Heavenly Father in watching over him in his early years. An instance he related which occurred when he

was about six or seven years old, shall be mentioned:—One day he strayed away from his attendant, and wandered into a place where a stream of water was rapidly running from a neighbouring mill, he missed his footing, and falling into the water was carried away with the current; he was within a very few yards of being driven by the force of the stream under an archway, where he must unavoidably have been drowned, when a man passing along saw the child, and taking hold of his clothes, succeeded in extricating him from his perilous situation, free from any injury, though greatly frightened, and thoroughly saturated with wet.

In consequence of his sudden death, Mr. Mathias left his affairs in a very unsettled state; and some people took advantage of this circumstance, and the youth of his son, to appropriate part of his property to themselves. A property which, under the management of careful men, would have secured

to his child so far an independence, as with a good education and his own exertions might have made him even rich, was embezzled or frittered away, when there was no one who could call on those who undertook its management to account for the manner in which it had been squandered.

Happily for the young Benjamin, and for many others, the late Rev. Dr. M'Dowell, of Mary's-abbey, had been appointed his guardian, and he used all his influence to procure the best education for his young ward, who has often expressed much thankfulness that he was entrusted, so far as his education was concerned, to such a kind and wise friend. Dr. Kennedy, father of the Rev. James Kennedy, late Fellow of Trinity College, was one of his early preceptors, and prepared him for entering the university. From his instructions, under the divine blessing, he received the most decidedly religious impressions.

At a very early age he felt deeply anxious to become a preacher of the Gospel. All who were consulted on this subject, with the exception of Dr. M'Dowell and Dr. Kennedy, thought he should go into business, and arrangements were even made for this purpose; but his Heavenly Father had work for him to do which required a very different course. His own wishes strongly united with those of his two friends, and confirmed their opinion; accordingly, it was determined he should be prepared for college.

At this period he was quite undecided whether he should join the Church of England or the Church of Scotland. At that time, the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel had not, in the preaching of the parochial clergy, that prominence which the subject of our memoir felt to be their place: he was therefore in the habit of attending on the Sabbath days either at Mary's-abbey or Plunket-street meeting-house; but when he knew that he

should be allowed to follow his inclinations, and become a minister of Christ, he determined to examine the subject very carefully, and decide on joining that church which, after the closest investigation, united with earnest prayer for direction, should seem to him the most scriptural, and the best adapted for bringing the Gospel to the multitude who were living in ignorance of vital religion, or in habits of vice.

With a very lively mind, and possessing great capability of enjoyment among his friends, the young Benjamin united much thought and deep research. He manifested great love for reading, even when a mere child. He has mentioned to his friends that he used when very young to lay out every sixpence he could command in buying books, and when he had collected a few, fixed some shelves in his trunk, which he turned on the end to form a book-case, and over these he used to bend, looking at them with as

much delight as ever miser gazed on his gold.

When only a child, his character was very decided. The late Lady Belvidere, whose father was for a time entrusted with his early education, has been heard to say, that the family were all attached to him on account of his kind manner and correct moral conduct; and many of those who were intimate with Dr. Kennedy, have declared, that he always spoke of his young friend and pupil with the affection of a parent for his child.

When at the university he was esteemed for considerable learning and abilities, and likewise for exemplary conduct. On one occasion, some persons were speaking in a large company of the merits of different preachers; a gentleman present said, "I am much mistaken if there be not a young man *now* in the college who will surpass them all — his name is *Mathias*. I have

heard him speak,* and know his character; and I feel assured he will one day be a bright and shining light." He loved the acquisition of knowledge, and had his mind stored with much that was useful; but the writings which he most delighted to study, next to the word of God, were the works of the fathers of the English church; and he has been heard to say, during the time he was constantly occupied in preaching, that he esteemed it a peculiar providence he was so much led to this kind of study; for when he was actively engaged in parochial duties, and preparations for addressing a congregation, he had little leisure for reading, and found it necessary to draw on his former stock of information.

In college, the late Rev. John Walker was his tutor; and a warm attachment always

* Probably at the Historical Society, where he often spoke.

subsisted between them, which continued, even when the strange opinions in religion afterwards adopted by Mr. Walker, prevented them from holding the Christian intercourse they had formerly enjoyed. While Mr. Mathias was a student at the university, he frequently spent part of the summer vacation with friends in the country. To the late Dean Maunsell and his family he was much attached. While on a visit in the hospitable mansion of his late friend, he received a letter from Mr. Walker, which, on account of the advice given by him, and the manner in which his pupil so much profited by the course recommended, may be considered worthy the attention of all young candidates for the ministry.

FROM REV. J. WALKER TO B. W. MATHIAS, ESQ.

"Dublin, August 19th, 1795.

"My dear Mathias,

"I intend to make this sheet the common property of you, Maturin, and your host,

having no time to write a sheet-full to each. You have not told me any thing of your employment in the country. I hope you will not spend the time in mere *enjoyment*, even of Christian friends. Our souls may starve upon it, and what is worse, we may be ignorant of their leanness. You have a peculiar call to diligence above many others, in the prospect of being called to the ministerial work. Now is the time to lay in knowledge, experimental knowledge, and a deep acquaintance with the Scriptures. I remember many years ago following the practice of some methodists in reading them *on my knees;* but I soon found that *bodily* posture profited nothing. The point is, to be prostrate in spirit before the mercy-seat while we hear God speaking to us in his word. We cannot too much guard against lightness in reading the Bible, in prayer, and other holy duties; or be too studious to have a sense of the infinite majesty of a holy

God weighty upon our spirits. The total want of this makes formalists, infidels, and heretics; and the imperfectness of it keeps believers out of much of their privileges, and sadly checks their growth. After you enter on the sacred office, you will find—what I trust you are apprised of already—that to the profitable and faithful discharge of it, much more will be necessary than a clear view of Gospel truths, and an habitual readiness to declare and defend them. That you may have what is further needful, avoid excess of company—even religious; excess of talking—even upon serious subjects; be much in retirement, prayer, and study; and pursue all your studies for the one object—to consecrate them all to the one Lord.

"But if I write more I shall have neither room nor time for others, so I commend you to the Lord, and remain,

"Yours affectionately,

"J. WALKER."

While Mr. Mathias resided in college, he invited a few young men, who appeared to value the sacred Scriptures, to meet in his rooms, for the purpose of studying them with prayer for the Lord's blessing. There were then very few indeed who would care for this employment, or think seriously on the subject. These young men also taught at a Sunday-school; and when any religious characters arrived from the country, or from England, more particularly clergymen, they were always invited to join this party. Among several others in whose society they seemed to have had much pleasure, was the late Rev. Samuel Pearce of Birmingham. A letter from him to his friend is here given, as being well worth preserving.*

* This letter has already been published in Mr. Pearce's life.

FROM REV. S. PEARCE, TO B. W. MATHIAS, ESQ., TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

"Birmingham, October 26, 1796.

"Dear Brother Mathias,

"I have been employed the whole day in writing letters to Dublin; and it is the first day I have been able to redeem for that purpose. I will not consume a page in apologies; let it suffice to say, that necessity, not disinclination, has detained from my Irish friends those proofs of my gratitude and esteem, which, in other circumstances, I ought to have presented them a month ago. I thought this morning of answering all demands before I slept, but I have written so many sheets, and all *full*, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin for this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose I know not. To form friendship with good men is pleasant; but to maintain all that communion which friend-

ship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be could I meet my Irish friends in *propria persona*, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse; but 'the Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.' Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander, but then their usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion; and what are we, my friend, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries, keep near the luminary, and receive more of its light and heat; while others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a less portion of his light; yet, if amidst all this diversity, *they do belong to this system*, two things may be affirmed of all—they all keep true to one centre, and all

borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they performing their revolutions. And is not all this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant our graces—the more cheerful and active are our lives. But, alas! we are all comets—we all move in eccentric orbits; at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another, freezing and congealing to icicles. 'Oh, what a miracle to man is man!'

"Little did I think, when I commenced my letter, that I should thus have indulged in allegory; but true friendship, I believe, always dictates *extempore*, and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle: they can meet with better thoughts than I can furnish them with in every bookseller's shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship; and this, I

think, sometimes makes even nonsense palatable. But I have some questions to put to you: first, how are all my college friends, Messrs. Walker, Maturin, Hamilton, &c.? How is their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you? Are any praying students added to your number? Do all that you thought well of, continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me; pray tell me all, whether it make me weep or rejoice. I hope Mr. Hill's ministry was blest in Dublin; do you know any instance of it? We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, where the buddings never appeared to us in this world.

"How is it with your own soul? I thank God, I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. 'God is love!' That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns; that he reigns over all;

that he reigns over *me*, over my comforts, my crosses, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct. That he is 'God *over all*, blessed for ever.' I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me, no other cross to carry. The sun shines without all day long, but I am sensible of internal darkness: well, through grace, it shall be all light by-and-by. Yes, you and I shall be angels of light; all Mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal, and flaming with love! Oh! for the new heaven and the new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness!

"'O, what love and concord there, and what sweet harmony,
In heaven above, where happy souls adore thy Majesty!
Oh, how the heavenly choir all sing to him who sits above!
What admiring! and aspiring! still desiring!
O how I long to see this feast of love!'

"If you are not tired of such an eccentric correspondent, pray don't be long in writing to your affectionate friend,

"SAMUEL PEARCE."

About the same time, Mr. Mathias received a letter from London, written by one who had also visited this country, and had been invited to his rooms in college.

The following is an extract, dated November, 1796:—

"When I returned here, I was frequently employed in relating many pleasing scenes I had witnessed in Dublin, which far exceeded my expectations. O, how did my heart rejoice the first morning I breakfasted in your rooms in college; I cannot express the delight I felt, to hear the motives and the end for which you met;* and to see the Chris-

* The meeting of young men before spoken of.

tian liberality of sentiment which prevailed amongst you. I have often spoken of it with pleasure, and that pleasure will be greatly increased by learning that God is still present with you."

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Mathias receives ordination—Happy in his rector—Preaching acceptable—Establishes Sunday schools in the parish—Sets on foot clerical meetings—Invited to preach in a meeting-house—Bishop of Dromore's letter on the subject—Meeting of young men in college for studying the Scriptures encouraged by the Rev. J. Walker, F.T.C.D. —Mr. Mathias joins with his former tutor in supporting the "Evangelical Society"—Extracts from letters of Mr. Walker—Mr. Mathias invited to lecture at Wilmont—State of religion in that neighbourhood—Benefits of his preaching there—Two instances given—The honest miller.

In the year 1797, Mr. Mathias was ordained* for the Rev. Thomas Tighe's parish in the county of Down. He was most happy in meeting with such a rector. Mr. Tighe was a widower with only two sons residing with him; they were both very young, and his curate became an inmate of the family resi-

* By Dr. Porter, Bishop of Killala, in the old Castle chapel, Dublin.

dence. They appeared to feel for each other more as a father and son, than like a rector and his curate. Mr. Mathias's preaching soon became very acceptable to the people; the church was filled every Sunday, and crowds attended whenever he preached; yet not the least jealousy was expressed or felt by his excellent rector, who often spoke of his happiness in having been providentially led to choose one for his curate who was so well calculated to be useful to the parishioners; and, unaffected by any feeling of displeasure for the preference shown by the people for his curate, he always took every means of bringing him into notice, encouraging him to pursue any plan which he proposed for their benefit. He has been often heard to say, "That young man who has but just entered into his profession, makes *me* feel ashamed, who have been so much longer engaged in it." Yet seldom indeed has this, or any other country produced a more devoted and truly

pious clergyman than the Rev. Thomas Tighe—but his humility was deep and lasting.*

Mr. Tighe had two churches to attend every Sunday. They were about two miles separate; and such was the desire this truly Christian clergyman had for the good of his people, and his great modesty in not wishing to bring himself into notice, that he requested his curate to preach in both churches, that his people, as he said, might have the benefit of hearing him, while he went forward to the second church to read the service, that

* Mr. Tighe was not only remarkable for humility, he was also a very cheerful and happy man; and there was an air of sanctity about him that kept the most thoughtless and profane in awe. An instance of this occurred one day, when he happened to dine in company with a young man who was noted for using dreadful oaths; but while Mr. Tighe made one of the company his conversation was perfectly correct. Early in the evening Mr. Tighe left the room, and after he was gone, the young man assumed his former mode of speech. A person present observed to him that he had not sworn one oath while Mr. Tighe was there—he replied, "Swear in that man's presence! no; I defy any one to do that." *He forgot that the great God was present!*

it might be over against the time Mr Mathias should arrive to preach.

Persons of all religious denominations used to attend on his preaching; he regularly visited them in their houses, or when at work in the fields; and, like St. Paul, *became all things to all men that he might gain some.*

When speaking to the people, of whatever religious profession they might be, he met them on common ground—the vital truths of Christianity, as taught in the Bible; and owing to this practice, prejudice was disarmed, and his words found an entrance to their hearts. Sunday-schools had not been known in the parish previous to his appointment as curate; they were, however, established shortly after, and proved highly beneficial.

Mr. Mathias had left Dublin to enter on his clerical duties in the county of Down, at a period when the country was in a very critical state: the spirit of insurrection pervaded every part of the kingdom: numbers

of every class among the inhabitants were carried away by a violent enthusiasm that rendered them reckless of the evils which rebellion against the government must unavoidably heap on the nation; and many well-meaning men rushed forward to their own destruction, enticed by artful and designing persons. Groups of the peasantry were frequently seen collected round one who favoured the principles of rebellion, and of course made remarks in favour of these principles to his gaping audience. One man in particular Mr. Mathias discovered, added much that was not in the newspaper, and the poor ignorant people used to say, they liked to hear Neddy Doran read the news, as he brought more out of one paper than any one else would bring out of two.

Mr. Mathias and his rector were fully aware of the evil which was spreading on all sides. Disaffected Protestants united with Romanists, in the unhallowed work of in-

surrection; arms were collected and concealed; and every thing seemed ready for the moment when the signal for destruction should be given—no time therefore was to be lost in endeavours to avert the impending danger. These active and useful clergymen exerted their utmost influence to direct the people in the right way. The parishioners were visited in their cottages—were induced to come to the residence of their kind pastors for the purpose of religious instruction. As they laboured in their fields they were reasoned with on the comforts of peace; and the blessings so abundantly bestowed by a munificent and gracious Creator were pointed out as causes of gratitude and thanksgiving. As few of the lower class could read, it was necessary to expose the impositions practised on them by the emissaries of rebellion; and one means used to enable them to detect these impositions in future, was to teach the people to read. This was done with great success, and as

the peasantry in the north are mostly Protestant, they are more accustomed to reason than those in the south, where Romanism is the predominant religion — the former are consequently more open to conviction.

The disinterested conduct of both the rector and curate in relieving the wants of those in distress, and giving whatever comfort they could, both for the souls and bodies of their parishioners, had a great effect in gaining their esteem and confidence; they regarded them as their best friends, and consulted them on every occasion.

In April, 1798, Mr. Mathias paid a visit to his friends in Dublin, where he remained about a month. On the twenty-third of May, the signal was given for a general rising of the rebels throughout the kingdom, by the burning of all the mail-coaches shortly after they left Dublin; and on the night of the

twenty-fourth, Mr. Mathias hastened down to the country, that he might be at his post in the time of danger.

When passing on the northern road, he saw the still smoking embers of the coach which had been set fire to the night before. He was received with a sincere welcome—went again among the people—preached two days after from Amos iv. part of 12th verse—"Prepare to meet thy God." He set before the people the dreadful state of those who entered the presence of their God unprepared, or who were the means of hurrying others into his presence full of violent passions, and engaged in unlawful pursuits: he spoke of their accountability to that great being who had instituted governments, and commanded his people "to submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the

punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well."*

This address produced most beneficial effects. The consequence of the exertions made by these two Christian clergymen—the rector and his curate—was, that though the great majority of the inhabitants of the neighbouring parishes joined the rebels, and fought some time after at the battle of Ballynahinch, *not one went from Mr. Tighe's parish!* Some of them met at different times to consult what they should do; but in every instance their meetings ended favourably—though there were many United Irishmen in the parish; and it was universally agreed among the people, that rebellion was a bad business, and contrary to the law of God. A few of the people were heard to say, that if the rebels gained the victory at Ballynahinch, they should be obliged to join the party. The York Fen-

* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

cibles had been cut off a day or two previous, having been led into a narrow road, between two high hedges, behind which the insurgents had sheltered themselves, and fired on the troops as they passed through; and the rebels were all in high spirits as they marched into Ballynahinch. But the Lord in his gracious providence put a stop to their exultation. *The work was his own;* for when the military were reduced to their *last* round of cartridge, the leaders of the rebels *quarrelled* among themselves, and a total rout ensued. The battle was the Lord's! "The Lord of hosts was with his people, the God of Jacob was their refuge!"

While the parishioners were the first objects of his care, and attention to their spiritual interests his first duty, Mr. Mathias endeavoured to encourage the study of the sacred Scriptures, and the knowledge of divine truth, as far as his sphere of influence extended. For this purpose, with Mr. Tighe's

full concurrence, a few young clergymen were invited to meet at Parson's Hill, the residence of Mr. Tighe, and there read together the Ordination service—consult on the best manner of performing the sacred duties in which they had engaged—and read the Scriptures with prayer for a blessing on the means used; a sermon was also written and read by Mr. Mathias.* It was then determined that these meetings should be held monthly, and some other clergymen wished them to be at their houses.

It has been observed, that Mr. Mathias's preaching was very acceptable, both to Dissenters, who were Protestants, and also to Roman Catholics. An instance occurred which proved this, and likewise showed the liberality of his bishop, Dr. Percy, of Dromore.

It is the custom in the Church of Scotland, to receive the Sacrament of the

* *Vide* No. I. in his published volume of Sermons.

Lord's Supper only twice a year, in each congregation. At these periods, all the neighbouring ministers attend; and there are prayers and sermons for several days. One of these sermons was always preached on the Monday after the administration of the Sacrament. It was announced that the elders of the meeting-house in the parish, intended asking Mr. Mathias to preach this sermon. Mr. Tighe and he both agreed that should this invitation be given, it ought to be received with kindness; but at the same time they could not accede to the wishes of the elders and people without the entire approbation of their diocesan. Accordingly, Mr. Tighe wrote to his lordship, and received the following letter in reply:—

"Dromore House, 19th May, 1799.

"Dear Sir,

"You do me but justice in believing I would concur with you in any proper

measures for promoting liberality of sentiment, and religious harmony with our Protestant dissenting brethren. I cannot see any just objection to the procedure you mention, that will not be counterbalanced by the good effects which, by the Divine blessing, we may hope it will produce, in removing prejudices, and in conciliating and promoting brotherly love among Christians. That the former may decrease, and the latter continue to prevail, until all differences cease from among us, is the fervent wish, and prayer of,

"Dear Sir, your affectionate brother,

"And faithful servant,

"THOMAS DROMORE.

"P.S.—Excuse this short billet, written in haste just as I came out of church; and with my kind remembrance to Mr. Mathias, tell him I hope it will not be long before he contrive to let me be his hearer."

Mr. Mathias was much beloved by those who knew him, and highly esteemed by his Christian friends, who greatly valued him on account of his true and lively piety, and were more affectionately drawn towards him by a trait of character, not so common as could be wished among the followers of him who wept over the grave of Lazarus, and while suffering agony on the cross, said to his beloved disciple—"Behold thy mother!" He sincerely rejoiced in the joy of others—lamented over their misfortunes—and never was known to speak with unkindness of the absent. He certainly did act on the principle, *that we should love our neighbours as ourselves!*

When he went to the north, he left a little knot of friends, who used frequently to meet for the purpose of studying the sacred Scriptures. Almost the only clergyman of the Church of England who would then ever meet with them was his friend Mr. Walker, at that time trustee and chaplain

of Bethesda, as well as Fellow of Trinity College. He was then very decidedly attached to the Established Church; but feeling assured that true Christianity, founded on the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, was the great object to be desired, as alone valued by the author of the Bible, he gladly met with all whom he had reason to believe loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, and likewise desired to promote the spread of true religion, and extend the limits of Christ's kingdom upon earth; he therefore encouraged a society which took the name of the "Evangelical Society," where real Christians of every denomination united to advance the knowledge of Divine truth.

Mr. Mathias heartily joined with his attached tutor in his endeavour to confirm the small body of real Christians which was then to be found in this country, in the principles on which the society was

formed—a simple desire to promote the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. The following extract of a letter he received from Mr. Walker, will show the success with which their efforts were crowned:—

"Our society has been a rallying point for all lively and liberal Christians of all parties, not for bringing them out from their several denominations, but for bringing them to act in brotherly concert in them. I hope it will long continue the standard of union, which no new party can be. I have scribbled until I have no room to express the joy I feel at the intelligence you give me about your parish. Blessed be the Lord! He is reviving us; fear not. Let us but believe, and we shall see the glory of God. Let us, in his strength, proclaim his name, and He will make his people know it. He has wise reasons for not employing angels in the work, but poor sinners encompassed

with infirmities. The excellency of the power shall appear to be of him and not of us.

"Ever most faithfully yours,

"J WALKER."

Mr. Mathias frequently wrote to his Dublin friends, but all his letters have been lost. Extracts from the answers to some of them, may show the kind of communications conveyed in them.

FROM MR. WALKER.

"I am so particularly hurried, that I cannot express what I feel at the account you give. Blessed, blessed be our God! He is arising to build up Zion—to turn again her captivity—and we are like men that dream. I long to see you, to communicate some accounts of the same kind. How should I rejoice in rambling with you through the country, and sharing in your joy. . . . Nature would often sigh

for a release from town; but grace rejoices in my Lord's appointment. I remember an anecdote of a soldier, who suffered himself to be frozen to death on his post, rather than quit it a few yards without orders—it preaches to me. Love to your dear rector—the Lord be with you, both as your glory and your defence.

"Ever yours most affectionately,

"J. WALKER."

FROM THE SAME, IN NOV. 1799.

"I had learned with much satisfaction of the Clerical Society you mention — and I expect much good from it. I think there are appearances of a great work in our church. The other institution you mention, I think too contracted.* Why not make it prayers for the general church? I can

* A number of pious persons agreed, at a particular hour, to offer up prayers for the revival of true religion in the Established Church.

bring promises with me to the throne of grace for that, which I cannot use for any particular church with certainty.* *Entre nous*, I am apt to think that the revival which appears about to take place in our church is preparatory to its dissolution as an establishment, that there may be provided against that event, a body of labourers who will not want tithes to stimulate them to continue. I like your idea about the homilies,† and the works of our good old divines, and can lend you several old bishops, Reynolds, Davenant, Hopkins — Reynolds I admire particularly. Suppose you add some notes to show that these are the doctrines of the Reformation.‡ I

* A very different sentiment from that held by Mr. Walker afterwards; when he would hold *no* Christian communion with those who did not separate from all other churches, and unite with him and a few followers, who declared that *they* only were the true church!

† This was to publish them separately and cheaply.

‡ The subject of this memoir subsequently published a

have long had matter enough for the third number of the Magazine,* but the sinews of war are still wanting."

In the year 1800, Mr. Mathias received an invitation to lecture, alternately with another clergyman, the Rev. Thomas Higginson, at Mr. Stewart's of Wilmont, about twenty miles from Mr. Tighe's. The Gospel was not preached either in church or meeting-house in the vicinity; but some of the family had been led, by observing the Christian conduct, and hearing of the happy death of a servant-maid, to see the difference between the cold, heartless morality preached by those on whose ministry they were accustomed to attend, and the happy influential truths

work entitled, "An Enquiry into the Doctrines of the Reformation," and made very full quotations from the Fathers of the English Church.

* The *Evangelical Magazine*, well calculated for general usefulness.

taught in the sacred Scriptures. In consequence of this, they sought for, and found, some individuals who prized the word of God. Some of the Wesleyan Methodists had preached in the neighbourhood, and they introduced the Rev. Mr. Higginson to the family, and he brought Mr. Mathias to the house. These clergymen came once a fortnight to lecture in the drawing-room: a portion of the church-prayers having been read by one, the other then addressed a crowded audience, as all who desired it had full liberty to attend; and thus another opportunity was afforded Mr. Mathias, of exalting a Saviour whom he loved, and leading sinners to rejoice in his salvation.

Mr. Stewart,* at whose house these lectures were held, was a man of highly honourable

* Mr. Stewart was a lineal descendant from the Earl of Galloway's family. A son of John of Garlies came to Ireland in 1595. The family settled at Ballydrain, in the county of Antrim, in the year 1608.

and upright principles, and strict morality. His nobility of character secured for him the esteem of his numerous acquaintance. Though a person of great integrity, he was, alas! systematically opposed to the Gospel scheme of salvation. Without any examination of the subject, he had early in life embraced the doctrines of Arianism, and continued to hold his erroneous opinions until he had passed the seventieth year of his age. When some Christian-minded clergymen were first introduced into Wilmont for the purpose of holding lectures there, he merely endured their presence to gratify his family. Yet the Lord had mercy in store for him, though he knew it not! When Mr. Mathias preached, he listened, delighted with his oratory — pleased with his eloquence and animated manner: still he thought but little of the great truths which were brought before him. However, when he became more intimate with Mr. Mathias, the conversation

of that zealous minister—bearing on the same truths which he had declared in his preaching—his heart became softened, conscience was aroused, he was led to feel that he was a sinner, and stood deeply in need of a Saviour. The state of his mind at this period was similar to the condition of the blind man on whose eyes Jesus laid his hands, "and asked him if he saw aught, and he looked up and said, I see men as trees walking." But the Spirit was poured out from on high, dispelling the thick clouds that veiled his mental vision; the dawning of a brighter day gradually dispersed the darkness of his spiritual night; and at last, "the Sun of Righteousness" arose in all his brilliancy, shedding his heavenly effulgence on his soul; the "eyes of his understanding were enlightened;" he was enabled to "behold the king in his beauty," and, with believing Thomas, to exclaim, "My Lord, and my God." As yet, however, he was unable to enjoy

the privilege of believing that it ever could be the happiness of the Christian to be delivered from all fear of "the last enemy"—death.

While in this frame of mind, he was called on to witness the decease of a dear child, who rejoiced in the hope of immediately entering into the presence of her God and Saviour; he saw that in her case the victory of the grave was overthrown, and that death had lost its sting. His fears were now removed, and he no longer doubted the power and goodness of the Lord to banish *all fears* from the believer in life's closing scene. Shortly after, he fell into a declining state of health; he was then observed to retire much within himself, and be often engaged in silent prayer. On one occasion, believing his end was quickly approaching, he called all his family around him. Mr. Mathias was among them; he entreated them to devote themselves wholly to the Lord—said, that

they and he had reason to thank their heavenly Father for having sent that dear child of God, to point out to them the free salvation purchased for sinners—that he had brought a blessing to that house, such as they could only fully appreciate in eternity. "You know not," he continued, "how much I disliked and despised those whom I now know to be the dear people of God, and how much I was opposed to his word—now it is my delight." He then requested to have the twenty-third psalm read to him; when it was finished, he repeated, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." "Yes, dear Saviour, *thou art* with me! Oh, it is like meeting a dear friend to lean on for support and protection, when surrounded by distress and danger!"

In the year 1805, after Mr. Mathias had been settled at Bethesda, he went, at the earnest request of his father-in-law, to visit

him, and while there, he wrote the following account of his state:—"His mind is much occupied about his dissolution; he astonishes —— with his desire to depart. A few mornings since he had something like a dream, but would not allow it was a dream; he thought he was dead, and that E——* was waiting just ready to receive him into heaven. He said, all fear of death was taken from him, and when he saw his son standing at his bedside, and was assured he was still alive, he seemed quite grieved. He then had all his family called that he might have prayer with them. —— said, 'he astonishes me, he seems desirous of death.' When urged to take nourishment he replied—'Why do you wish to keep me longer here? Yet, God's will be done.'"

One of his family who had been with him in his last moments, has given the

* His daughter, who had died some time previous.

following account of his state:—"All his comfort and happiness were derived from the work his Saviour finished on the cross, and from the comforting promises of his word. He said, 'the love of God to him was more than words could express, or his heart could conceive.' Frequently, when he thought there was no one near him, he was overheard praying most fervently, and often repeated, with his hand uplifted—'My Saviour, *my dear Saviour*, take me to thyself.' He spoke of his old friend, Mr. W. E——: 'Write to him,' he said: 'tell him I send my parting blessing, that my heart is filled with love to my God and Saviour, *and that has taken away all fear of death.*' It was his delight to hear the Bible read; he frequently spoke of Mathias with affection and gratitude. He continued for some time in a heavenly state of mind, either engaged in prayer or praise; when he quietly fell asleep in Jesus, his spirit departing without a struggle."

And surely we may confidently believe that he has welcomed into the regions of eternal day, the ransomed soul of that faithful minister, who, under God, was the means of leading him to that Saviour before whom he now casts his crown, saying, "thou art worthy!"

Mr. Mathias knew the state of the neighbourhood with respect to religion. He was aware that Socinianism was publicly taught in some of the churches. In dissenting-houses, where the minister professed to belong to the Church of Scotland, the doctrines of that church were openly denied, and even ridiculed. He was therefore rejoiced at the opening made for him at Wilmont, by which he was enabled to declare that *only* in the Lord Jesus Christ could any soul be saved, and to prove this from the sacred Scriptures. His preaching and conversation were much blest. One lady in particular, who could not bear to think of listening to any one preach-

ing, except within the walls of a church, was induced to come once and judge for herself. She was thoroughly acquainted with the letter of Scripture—could repeat much of it—and for many years had made it her regular practice to read the psalms and lessons for the day, without a spiritual understanding of their meaning. She met Mr. Mathias at Wilmont, determined to oppose his opinions, and to maintain her own; but while conversing with him, she saw that he had such an acquaintance with the whole tenor of Scripture, and so clearly brought one passage to elucidate another—that the truth flashed on her mind; she felt she had never understood the spiritual meaning of what she had so frequently read; and though, having often, in the words of our beautiful liturgy, confessed she was a "miserable sinner," yet never really believed what she repeated; but now it seemed to her as if a veil had been removed, which had hitherto clouded her mind; she cast herself

as a sinner on Christ; she could talk only of the mercy shown to *her*, who had lived for above thirty years in the darkness of ignorance, while she thought herself one of the wisest and best. Mr. Mathias's preaching* confirmed what his conversation had begun, and, in the midst of great opposition, she proved that a saving change had taken place in her heart.

Anxiety for the spiritual welfare of her family and friends then manifested itself in almost all her words and actions; and even irreligious characters were constrained to praise, what they nevertheless regretted, as being too favourable to that Gospel which they so much disliked—her consistent conduct. A short time after this change took place in her mind, she showed symptoms of pulmonary consumption; her body wasted away, but her

* The sermon she first heard Mr. Mathias preach, was from Eph. v. 1.

confidence in her Saviour became stronger; and in about two years from the period she had first heard the Gospel from Mr. Mathias, she died, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and leaving a proof to her husband and children, that the sting of death had been removed: some of her family followed her example, and received Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

Another instance in which his preaching, about the same time, proved a blessing, is here added. A poor and afflicted man, who had long made a profession of religion,—and endeavoured to act consistently with that profession,—was led one evening to attend Mr. Mathias's lecture at Wilmont,—owing to his earnest desire to know, savingly, "the truth as it is in Jesus." He listened with the deepest attention to the instructions given by the preacher. On his arriving at home, he searched the Scriptures, in order to learn whether the truths they contained were in

conformity with what he had heard that evening. He was soon convinced of their perfect agreement. The great truth,—that the salvation purchased for man by the sacrifice once offered on the cross, was full and free for the very chiefest of sinners, was effectually impressed on his mind. This leading doctrine of the Gospel proved highly consolatory to him—he discovered that he had hitherto been living in a state of bondage, and seeking to add some works of his own to the all-sufficient merits of Christ.

One day after this, he was conversing with one of his former associates in religion, and made use of the following words—"*If I had five hundred souls, I would cast them all on my Saviour!*" His companion replied to him, "Take care, don't deceive yourself—you must add your own works." The other answered—"No, I do not deceive myself—for the blood of Christ is sufficient to wash away the sins of the whole world; and I

can cast mine on him with perfect confidence." This poor man shortly after endured severe agony from a most painful disease, which he bore with truly Christian patience, and even rejoiced under suffering. As he was in very distressed circumstances, and had no relations to take care of him, a gentleman, who had witnessed his humble and consistent conduct, felt much pity for his desolate condition, and admired his patient endurance of poverty and pain. He provided a suitable person to attend on him, and supplied him with every necessary comfort while he lived. The promise of Christ was fulfilled with respect to this benevolent individual, that if *even a cup of cold water be given to a child of God, it shall not go unrewarded.** For though he was only induced to act as he did from humane feelings, being at the time uninfluenced by the sanctifying principles of

* Mat. x. 42.

the Gospel, it pleased the Lord, that several years after, he should be led to embrace and rejoice in those very truths which he formerly despised; and the venerable subject of this memoir was the instrument the Most High employed to accomplish the work of his conversion.

The enmity of the natural mind to the truths taught in the Bible, was shown strongly by many persons in the neighbourhood; and several, who had been intimate with Mr. Stewart's family before the introduction of divine truth among its members, would no longer visit them—saying, the religion they had now embraced was *enthusiasm*, and made them *mopes*. Mr. Mathias, however, showed by his own example, that to be *truly* happy, we must be *truly* religious. He was a most lively and humble Christian, enjoying Christ in his gifts, and thankfully receiving from him whatever his love and bounty chose to bestow on one who felt

himself to be unworthy of the least of his mercies.

It has been mentioned that Mr. Mathias's preaching was frequently attended both by Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters of different denominations, who were probably at first led to hear him from curiosity,—but many came afterwards from better motives. There was one man in particular who seemed to receive the Gospel with much simplicity, and gave great encouragement to this young clergyman to persevere in the course he had commenced—proving that he had not "run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

In Mr. Tighe's parish there was a miller, who was remarkable for his honesty, he was a Roman Catholic, and had been induced by some of his neighbours to accompany them "to hear the curate preach." What he heard arrested his attention, and while he was confirmed in what before had been right and honourable in his conduct towards man,

he was now led to look at his motives—to observe the state of his heart; and having had the extent and holiness of God's law laid before him, became convinced that he was indeed a great sinner, and could not, by any means save himself from the punishment due to his sins. He lost all confidence in his upright and honest conduct for justification before God—learned to read when he was above forty years of age—procured a Bible, and committed much of it to memory.

After some time this honest miller was seized with a severe illness which threatened his life: he sent to request Mr. Mathias would come to see him; when he entered the room where the sick man was confined, he immediately said to him: "Mr. Mathias, I did not send for you as I should once have sent for the priest; no, I know neither you nor he could do *me*, a poor vile sinner, any good, but I want you to pray to God for me; I have no trust in man; I trust

only in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save the chief of sinners, and invites all to come to him and be saved; therefore I, unworthy as I am, dare to come to the throne of his grace, and to cast myself on his mercy."

Having repeated some of the most cheering and encouraging portions of the sacred Scriptures, he continued—"When I longed to know more of the Bible, I determined to learn to read; but I was old, above forty years. The neighbours laughed at me, and said, 'Hoot, ye auld fool, ye will fash o' it,' (*i. e.*, tire of it). But I did na' 'fash o' it,' and now, thanks to my gracious God—my precious Saviour, his word is my support, my delight. I have it in my heart—it is my comfort through the night—it gives me happiness by day. I would not give my Bible for the whole world—no, nor for fifty worlds. What is this perishing world to me, when the God who made all things

is my God, my salvation throughout eternity?"*

* The great change that has lately taken place among the clergy and candidates for ordination, may be proved from an anecdote related by a young man who was appointed to a curacy in the diocese of Dromore about the year 1818. He, with several others, had been ordained by the bishop of the diocese; they had dined together, and in the evening one of the party proposed some kind of amusement to wear away the time. This young man spoke of the solemn engagement they had just entered on, and the sacredness of the Sabbath; and said he thought they might spend the evening profitably, by reading over the service, and studying some portion of God's word. Two or three immediately began to laugh, and one said, "Oh, this smells of *Mathias!*" The young man who mentioned this was truly pious—was settled in a neighbouring curacy for some time, and said, that as he walked over the hills, and called in at the cottages, he found the name of *Mathias* was loved and revered.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Walker applies to Mr. Mathias to take his place at Bethesda—He goes to Dublin—Extract of a letter from Mr. Walker—Extracts of letters from Mr. Mathias—His remarks on Death and Infidelity—He establishes cottage lectures—Summer evening field lectures—His health suffers—Invited to Wilmont—His conversation greatly blessed.

In the summer of 1802, Mr. Walker applied to Mr. Mathias to supply his place at Bethesda, and allow him to go to Buxton, for the recovery of his health. In a letter written for that purpose, he says:—

"I have a tendency to paralysis or apoplexy, combined with flying gout; and have been advised to lay aside preaching for a time, and to use Buxton waters. Can you help me?—if so, when can you come up,

and for how long a time? I know your brotherly affection for me, will prompt you to do what you can; and I trust our common Lord will lead you to do what you ought. So I desire to leave it, satisfied whatever be the issue. I think I can say, that while flesh and heart faileth, the Lord is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; and that while I consider it a duty to use all lawful means for propping up the earthly tabernacle, I can look forward to its dissolution with joy."

In another letter, Mr. Walker writes in the following manner to his former pupil, thanking him for taking his place at Bethesda, thereby setting him at liberty to go to Buxton for the benefit of his health:—

"How can I sufficiently thank my dear friend for his kindness?—indeed, the retained

kindness of an old friend is particularly sweet to me at present. It has long pleased God to try me to the quick on this point; but I bless his name, the trial has been sweetly profitable, and has taught me, I trust, more than I should otherwise have learned, to cease from man and live upon himself alone, and look with desire and joy to the day when he will thoroughly plead and vindicate my cause."

When Mr. Mathias went to Dublin, he became acquainted with the late Rev. Mr. Hartley,* a Moravian clergyman, and a devoted servant of Christ. With great gentleness, this excellent man possessed much firmness, and a highly cultivated mind. Their characters were so similar, that he and Mr. Mathias formed a friendship for each other, which only terminated when the

* Father to the Rev. John Hartley, some time a missionary in Greece.

Lord, in his providence, took Mr. Hartley to himself, just as he was preparing to spend some time with his friend, in the hope it might conduce to the recovery of his health.

In Dublin, Mr. Mathias found himself surrounded by many old friends, who loved him, both for his Master's sake and his own; and Mr. Walker, during his stay at Buxton, wrote to his former pupil. Part of one of his letters is here given, as it tends to show the Christian spirit of that true disciple of the blessed Jesus, who, though he was in after years led, from false views, to stumble at trifles, was nevertheless preserved through faith unto salvation, and is now, we firmly trust, in the presence of his God and Saviour.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM REV. J. WALKER TO REV. B. W. MATHIAS.

"I was very fortunate in procuring a lodging; for the next night Admiral Gardiner

was obliged to sleep in a stable, and for want of accommodation went away the following morning. Blessed be God, the waters seem to agree with me perfectly, I am wonderfully well, and what with talking, and eating, and drinking, and walking, you would be surprised how the days pass over. However, my Master has opened some doors for me. I was allowed to preach in a farmer's house in the mountains about a mile off, and again on Sunday morning; at the latter time, the place was crowded, and many outside. I have also got the promise of Fairfield church, (a mile from this place on another side,) twice next Sunday, and I believe every Sunday while I stay. The parson scarcely minds it at all, so the clerk disposes of the pulpit; but demurred to giving it me of a week day; it is so *unusual*. I fear I must give up preaching in the mountains in the evenings, (and the poor people cannot attend at any other time on week days,)

for I have found walking home at night in the rain injure me. I find it very pleasant to have tracts with me, the cottagers receive them gladly. Oh that the Lord may richly water the little seed he allows me to scatter here! What a comfort to know that *his word* shall not return to him void. The state of religion here, as far as I have seen, appears very low; I have talked with many of the cottagers, and there is a pleasing sobriety about them. They are ready to talk to you *about* the Bible, and most of them have it in their houses; but they appear unawakened and pharasaic. I met some serious, (and, I trust, gracious,) men, but hitherto not one who would appear to enter into the spirit of the psalmist's invitation: 'Oh magnify the *Lord with me*, and let us exalt *his name* together.' May the quickening and testifying Spirit reveal to them and us more and more of the glory of that precious name, that it may be our

boast all the day long, and as ointment poured forth to our souls with fragrance ever fresh! It is the vile carnality and unbelief of our hearts that indisposes us ever to be weary of this, or to seek any other thing to rejoice in. It is a diseased appetite that has a craving for trash that cannot nourish. The Lord Jesus alone is the bread of life! May we continually feed on him, and hunger for nothing else."

Mr. Mathias read much and wrote but little, and there are very few remains of that little. He often regretted that he had not accustomed himself more to writing, especially sermons; and always recommended to his young clerical friends, or to divinity students, not to neglect this practice. He had several correspondents, but very few of his letters can be recovered. From these few we shall make some extracts:

"My dear E——,

"When we cannot have the pleasure of conversing with our friends, it is very pleasant to have an opportunity of writing to them, and it is peculiarly pleasant to write to a Christian friend; to one who has the same hopes and fears, the same pains and pleasures, the same Saviour, and the same heaven: this latter thought is peculiarly pleasing. When I am enabled in faith to think of heaven, I conceive the idea of a happy place where I shall through grace meet all my dear Christian friends after all their trials. Oh for stronger faith more steadily to realize this scene! It is equally necessary for our comfort and stability. What comfort have we when we can regard heaven as our *home*, with all the endearing sensations which home inspires; and what stability of soul, when by faith we look not on the things that are visible and temporal.

but invisible and eternal. I wish and pray to become more familiar with heaven. Were I going to any distant country, I should endeavour to get all the knowledge of it I could, and should try every means to familiarize myself with its manners and customs: and oh how much more should I thus anticipate an acquaintance with that state where I am to dwell for ever! I indeed think the principal business of a Christian's life, is to become acquainted with heaven and meet for it. May God grant this acquaintance and meetness more and more to my dear E—— and her unworthy correspondent. I was much struck and delighted to-day with the latter part of the nineteenth psalm, where David speaks of the law of God, and describes its nature and effects. What an encouragement, dear E——, to study it more: it will make us wise and humble, cautious and happy. Indeed there is scarcely any thing for which I have to

condemn myself more than neglect of God's word."

"Parson's Hill, 7th June, 1803."

Having spent some time at Wilmont for the recovery of his health, Mr. Mathias returned to his parochial duties. The following extract is from a letter written soon after: the date is 27th June, 1803:—

"I have been driving about the parish at a great rate since the weather grew good, though I have preached but once since I returned, and that was yesterday. How thankful should I be to the good God that he has enabled me to speak again to my people. Surely, life is worth nothing except so far as it is spent in the service of God, and in endeavours to be of use to the spiritual interests of our fellow sinners."

The date of the next letter we find in

July of the same year, the time of Emmet's rebellion :—

"We are all quiet here, and I believe numbers of the people are averse to insurrection. I trust you are tranquil and happy in the midst of all this alarm. Remember we are in *his* hands who can keep us most securely. Oh that we had more faith to trust him confidently with body and soul, and all their interests! I pray earnestly that you may enjoy much of the light of God's countenance, and be kept in perfect peace."

"The passage in John which you mention, (John xix. 11.) I believe may be paraphrased thus :—'As I am innocent, you as a judge could have no power over me at all, if it were not permitted by God that I, though innocent, should be brought before you and condemned; wherefore he who delivered me to you—either Judas who knew my inno-

ceney, and was bribed to betray me, or the body of the Jewish priesthood who for envy delivered me—having sinned against greater light and knowledge than you, a heathen, could do, have the greater sin to answer for.' Our Lord does not exculpate Pilate, but states that his guilt was less than that of the others."

"One thing I would enforce on you and on myself, is, to recollect that the motives of God's love to us are drawn from himself, not from us. He loves us because he is *love*. He has mercy because *he will have mercy*. Instead then of judging as we are apt to do, whether God loves us, by looking whether there be any thing in *ourselves* to induce that love, let us rather look to God and consider whether there be any thing in *him* to lead him to love."

"I have to bless God that though I feel

multiplied evils and sins in me, yet the Lord is still drawing me to himself, and I think divine things are making a deeper impression on my mind. I have much, very much yet to learn, and a great body of sin and death from which to be delivered."

"I wish to learn that you are very happy in God. Without this, what can make us happy?—as Cowper says, 'Give what thou can'st, without thee I am poor; and with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.' I have had much pleasure lately in considering the Christian under the character of a child of God, which he becomes by faith, (Gal. iii. 26, &c.), not by his works or merit; and then how delightful is the spirit of a child! a spirit of love, of obedience, of submission to the father's will, of concern for his honour, of pleasure in his company and instructions! How delightful also the character of God as a father! loving his

children who are his own offspring, sparing and pitying them, and making every allowance for them. (Psalm ciii.) Protecting them, supporting them, instructing, and, when necessary, correcting them, and finally giving them an eternal inheritance in heaven. Oh let us try to live under the abiding impression that we are the children of God; let us recollect that sonship is derived from *faith*; let us pray for the spirit of adoption, and for grace to walk worthy of our characters, imitating God as dear children."—Eph. v. 1.

"You do not know what a perverse and unworthy creature I am. Alas! I have been constantly perverse to my God, and yet I feel not my guilt and vileness as I ought; nor am I sorry for this as I should be—but he is the Lord, and changes not—he is my hope, and, blessed be his name, in this I can, and do often, rejoice."

"Remember it is the privilege of God's children to be happy—banish then anxiety and foreboding—rejoice in a reconciled Father, a faithful, unchangeable Saviour. Cast all your care upon him, and live in a continual sense of his presence. It is the Lord's will you should do so, and he will give you the power. This is my birth-day, and completes my thirty-first year; thus, even at the longest, half my course is over; but how near I am to its close, my God only can tell. Oh for more spirituality and active usefulness for the time which may remain! One of our congregation died yesterday—he is to be buried to-morrow. I propose to preach on the occasion, from these words, 'Be ye therefore ready also.' May God bless us with an habitual readiness to depart and be with him! It is my daily prayer that we may rest on God as children on a father, assured of his love, and confident in his goodness."

"12th Nov. 1803."

When among some persons whom he found were desirous to put away from them all serious thoughts of death, Mr. Mathias felt anxious to bring them to a better state of mind; he, therefore, addressing them with kindness, said—"Is this conduct wise? It might be so, perhaps, if forgetfulness of death would prevent dissolution; but instead of that, it only makes its arrival more alarming and more fatal. It is folly indeed; it is madness to rush blindfold on danger; it is rashness not to provide for a certain occurrence. *We must die!* Forgetfulness of this will make our death wretched: the proper remembrance of it will secure happiness."

Having reason to fear that some present were inclined to infidelity, he continued —"Perhaps some persons may possibly fly from the thoughts of dissolution, to that miserable comfort of infidels—the hope that death is an eternal sleep; but can any one really believe this?—can any one really em-

brace the idea of annihilation?—a thing unfounded in reason, and unexampled in nature! Does not conscience oppose it? Is it not combated by the love of life—the fear of death—the soul's desire of immortality? But though a person should persuade himself of this in the time of health and conviviality—can he do so in the lone hours of thought?—on the bed of sickness? or on the eve of death? Voltaire wished to do so in his departing moments, but he could not! Gibbon tried to do so, but he could not! When he took a retrospective view, he said all was unsatisfactory!—when he looked forward, all was gloomy and uncertain! And what can infidelity do more for any of us than it did for them? When the salutary voice of reason or of conscience sometimes whispers, perhaps there may be a God of justice, a future life, and a final judgment, what must the infidel fear and feel? Could

he bear that his last moments should be such as theirs? *Annihilation* is the very best that can be hoped for by the infidel; whereas that would be the *horror* of the real Christian, who has a well-grounded hope of eternal happiness, which forms his comfort under every trial in this life, and sheds a bright ray of peace and joy in his dying moments!"

The anxiety felt both by Mr. Mathias and his excellent rector, for the salvation of the parishioners, induced the former to yield to the wishes of many of the peasantry, and lecture in their cottages, and sometimes in the fields, in the evenings, the only time when the men could attend.

Let it be recollected, that by far the greater number of those who gladly came to his lectures in a house or in a field, could not be persuaded to enter the doors of a church. They were mostly Presbyterians or Romanists; therefore, though they

could appreciate and esteem a truly active, holy, Christian clergyman, their prejudices against the Established Church remained as strong as ever, except when grace really changed their hearts, and then it was not the place *where* they heard, but the *Divine truths* which were taught, that interested them.

The Bishop of Dromore had already shown a great willingness to meet the early prepossessions of the people, by the leave he had given to the clergy to preach in the meeting-house of the Scotch church, and he had said—"I care not where you preach in your own parish." This liberty was used for the benefit of all classes of the parishioners, in a way to yield as far as was proper to their prejudices.

In the fine summer evenings, when great numbers were willing to attend his lectures, and there was no room sufficiently large to contain the multitudes who thronged to hear

him, the minister and his congregation used to adjourn to a field, where the people would erect a temporary pulpit for him; and, seating themselves on a sloping bank, listen with such attention, that even a sudden shower of rain could not make one of them retire. Mr. Mathias has often spoken of the pleasure he felt when looking around, he saw the peasantry collecting from all the neighbouring cottages, wending their way over the furze-clad hills, some having come from a distance of three or four miles—and hastening to the spot selected as their place of worship, canopied over by the azure vault of heaven, the verdant turf alone forming their seats in that simple and sacred temple. And when, by the providence of God, he was, in after years, called to declare the free salvation, purchased for the chief of sinners, to the proud and the great, to the fastidious critic and the self-righteous professor, he has frequently looked back with regret on

his humble audience among the wilds of Downshire, and felt that his happiest days were spent there: however, it cannot be said, they were his most useful days; for he was afterwards placed where his preaching was attended by multitudes; whereas, in the country, comparatively few were his hearers.

His ministry among the poor people was greatly blest. Drunkards became sober — fighters became men of peace—idlers gave up their loitering, and "worked with their own hands" — and a neighbouring race-course, which was a constant scene of wickedness, ceased to be any longer so, and was not only cultivated for the benefit of man, but also, in one of the cottages erected on its bounds, a regular station was appointed for his lectures and prayer meetings. And some of those who were most absorbed in the vicious practices attendant on racing, became, through his instrumentality, consistent Christians.

Among the numerous persons to whom Mr. Mathias's labours as a minister were much blest, was a butcher, who was remarkable for profane swearing, drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking. Hugh Hear was emphatically known in the parish by the epithet of the *drunken butcher*, as Barney Canalty was distinguished as the *honest miller*, and this while both were uninfluenced by the Gospel, and acting only from the impulse of the natural mind—but the morality of the one could not save him, nor when he felt himself to be a sinner saved by grace, did it elate him—nor did the profligacy of the other prevent the Spirit of God from reaching his heart.

As all the parishioners were visited in their houses, Hugh was obliged to hear truths, which after a time made so much impression on his mind, that he was induced to go to church; he struggled hard at first against the convictions that conscience poured

on his heart, but some of the younger members of his family having been led to "renounce the devil and all his works," and to turn to God with all their hearts, he witnessed the happy effects of true religion in them, and they all joined in their entreaties to Mr. Mathias, that he would permit them to have a meeting for prayer and reading the Scriptures in the house of this once profligate man—the request was readily granted. This cottage was thus added to the number of those already appointed for collecting the poor people in the neighbourhood together, and many souls had cause for rejoicing that they were permitted to attend these cottage lectures: among them Hugh was a very prominent character — the lion had indeed become the lamb; and the great rough, surly, drunken butcher, who would cheat when he could, and take his Creator's name to witness a falsehood without any hesitation, was now become gentle, honest, and fearful

of giving offence to God and man. He continued to be a consistent character all the time Mr. Mathias remained in the parish, and there is no reason to believe he ever disgraced his Christian profession.

The frequent lectures which Mr. Mathias felt it his duty to hold through the parish, tended greatly to injure his health: he generally preached about thirty times in the month. When he held the lectures in a field his voice was necessarily raised above its natural pitch, and was therefore strained; but in the cottages it was even worse and more injurious to him; for as he always kept every appointment he had made, he was frequently obliged to ride through rain or snow, and to preach, surrounded by a damp, hot atmosphere, in consequence of the wet cloaks and coats of his audience, and the amazing turf fire heaped on by the owner of the cottage to do *honour* to the minister. This practice soon seriously injured

him: he became very weak, lost his voice, and was obliged for a time to give up preaching. He was invited to stay at Wilmont in order to recruit; and during the time he remained there, his conversation and consistent Christian conduct were productive of the most beneficial results. One of the family to whom his instructions had been much blest, was, during the time he was prevented from fully engaging in public duties, taken from this world of trial and sorrow to enjoy an eternity of happiness. Before she became acquainted with him, it had been her sincere desire to serve and please God; and she was doing many things to save herself; but Mr. Mathias was the means of proving to her that salvation is *free*, independent of all our works; that it is of *grace, the gift of God*.—Eph. ii. 8.

This dear girl was lively, sensible, and intelligent, much loved and respected by her friends and acquaintances. When she had

attained little more than her twentieth year, she was attacked by an illness which was not at first understood, but which eventually proved to be a complaint of the liver. She was long confined, and bore her sufferings with the greatest patience and submission to the will of her Heavenly Father. From the commencement of her illness she declared, she was persuaded that she should not recover, and seemed anxious to prepare her family for her death. All her hopes of eternal happiness were founded on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. She said one day to a friend, "I was long resting my hopes of acceptance with God on my feelings. I have now been taught that I must cast myself on Christ as I am; and when I am low and unable to make any exertion, I find one text of Scripture particularly comfortable—'Ye are complete in him.' This supports me under every trial, I can hang on Jesus and take him for my all."

As Mr. Mathias was much in the house during her illness, she often enjoyed his prayers and conversation. One night after he had left her, she inquired if he certainly intended to return to his parish the next day. Being informed it was his purpose to do so early in the morning, she replied, "Then I must make a request of him—it is to preach my funeral sermon in the parish church. The Lord knows my heart. I do not desire to have a eulogy passed on *me;* but I know that many will attend my funeral and hear the Gospel preached, who would not otherwise come within the sound of it. There are two passages of Scripture which I have of late contemplated with much pleasure. One is, 'I am the resurrection and the life;'* the other, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.'† I should wish him to

* John xi. 25. † Colos. iii. 4.

choose one of these for his text."* She had an earnest desire that all whom she loved, and the whole world, should enjoy the happiness which she had found true religion alone could give.

The breaking of an abscess on her liver was the immediate cause of her death. It was sudden and unexpected—but she was prepared for the great issue of events. She longed to be spared to see Mr. Mathias once more, as she said, to him, under God, she was indebted for the happiness she then enjoyed—*complete confidence in her Saviour;* but time was not allowed her: she was informed she could not possibly survive that night. Her whole anxiety then seemed to be, to spend the few remaining hours she might have in urging those around her to turn to the Lord with all their hearts. She took a last farewell of

* Mr Mathias did preach this sermon, and the church was crowded, particularly with young people.

her physician, who had attended her with much kindness. After thanking him for this, she said, "Oh, doctor, if you knew the joy the Christian has in the prospect of eternity; if you knew the joy *I* now feel in knowing that all my sins are pardoned for the sake of my blessed Saviour, you would not neglect what is really the only thing of consequence, and free for every sinner." The doctor was surprised and much affected. He spoke of her strength of mind. She replied, "No, I have no strength in myself—I am perfect weakness—but in the Lord is my strength. Grace alone supports me—to grace alone I owe my salvation." She soon grew extremely weak, but continued to follow with her eyes those whom she loved and whom she was about to leave. She was evidently engaged in prayer for them. She gently fell asleep in Jesus, in whose presence her prayers were changed to praise.

In the brief sketch which has been given

of this dear child. In God another instance may be added to the many, where the faithful preaching and holy conversation of the subject of this brief memorial were richly crowned with the blessing of his Heavenly Master. One more has joined the ransomed band who have since hailed with heavenly joy their much-loved pastor's arrival in the city of God, where, with many of the spiritual children whom the Lord had given him, he now shines a brilliant gem in the imperial diadem of heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Mathias marries—Continues still as curate to Mr. Tighe—Religious changes in Dublin—Mr. Walker's letter announcing his separation from the Establishment—Mr. Mathias's answer—Receives a letter from a friend in Dublin on the subject—Correspondence between Mr. Mathias and Mr. Walker continued.

In January, 1804, Mr. Mathias married a daughter of Mr. Stewart. He remained for nearly another year as curate to Mr. Tighe; the parishioners were greatly attached to him. He had established meetings among them for reading the sacred Scriptures, prayer, and conversation; and all were encouraged at a certain time to ask questions, which he answered. This proved very useful, inducing the people to study their Bibles at home, and to consider what they read.

While he was thus useful in a peaceful, retired country parish—enjoying the pleasure of finding his labours blest to a people attached to him—changes were taking place among the religious people in Dublin, most of whom were his personal friends; changes that brought him, most unwillingly, to act in opposition to those friends, and to come forward in a public manner, which he had ever wished to avoid. But his duty was plain, and he dared not shrink from following in the way which Providence opened for him. The letter here inserted was both a surprise and cause of grief to him:—

"Dublin, October 15, 1804.

"Dear Mathias,

"I think it necessary to inform you, as a trustee of Bethesda Chapel, that I last week, from a clear view of Christian duty, renounced all connexion with the religious establishment of this country; and

from the same view, indeed, must separate myself from all religious connections, except with those whom the Scriptures authorize me to walk with, as the disciples of Christ, under the regulations of his word alone. Of course while I am in that house, of which we are both trustees, the usual forms of divine service which were observed there until yesterday, will not be continued. I have not time to add more, but pray that you, dear Mathias, may be found at last a disciple indeed; and that all the disciples may be unceasingly filled with the knowledge of their Master's will, and may rejoice to follow him fully at whatever sacrifice.

"Affectionately yours,

"JOHN WALKER.

"If you write, direct Mr. J. Walker, and pay the postage, for I am poor. I did not get your letter about the books until my return from England; as they were books of occasional consultation I could scarcely

have lent them, but shall now sell them all."

The following is Mr. Mathias's answer:

"Parson's Hill, 20th October, 1804.

"My dear Sir,

"As I have been in Newry since Monday last, I did not until this day receive yours of the fifteenth, in which you say that the forms of divine worship usually observed in Bethesda Chapel will not be continued. Though I am extremely unwilling to differ from you, my dear sir, yet I must confess I cannot approve of this change, and must therefore request that the opinion of all the trustees may be taken upon it as soon as convenient. I am truly sorry you have to sell all your books, I should feel it a great sacrifice. As this is Saturday evening, I must conclude, requesting my love to Mrs. Walker and all friends.

"I am, dear sir, yours truly,

"B. W. Mathias."

A few days after the receipt of Mr. Walker's letter, one was brought to Mr. Mathias from a friend who had been for several years an attendant at Bethesda; consequently, one of Mr. Walker's stated congregation, and the early and attached friend of Mr. Mathias.

"17th October, 1804, Wednesday.

"My Dear Mathias,

"It is true! Mr. Walker has resigned his fellowship, and Robinson his curacy, and both have not only quit but are *opposed* to the establishment, *and to all establishments*, not however, acting in political matters. His (Walker's) change arose thus:—The curate of Newry sent up a printed notice of Mr. W.'s intention to preach in the Market-house, to the provost, on last Saturday evening was a week—Mr. W. came home, as he says, to think of other matters, when the question suggested itself to his mind, and he could not put it from him,—'suppose a number of believers, now for

the first time in the land, and that the government proposed to protect them, to make theirs the established religion, to provide livings, &c. &c. provided they would connect themselves with the state, and acknowledge those as heads whom they should place over them:'—or to that purport, and that the answer was as readily suggested, and with potent conviction: 'we thank you for your kind intentions, and will be grateful for any kindness you may show us; but the kingdom which our Master came to establish was not of this world. We cannot therefore connect ourselves with any but those who hold the same truths we do; nor can we receive any thing concerning religion save as we find it in the unerring Scriptures of truth, which we acknowledge as our only standard and rule of conduct to the exclusion of all the writings, works, and establishments of any set of men, whether connected with

the state or not,' or to the like purport. This *instantaneously* produced conviction in his mind and consequent determination to quit the college and establishment: and certainly I put his reason in the strongest view; which to me is perhaps a just speculative idea, but carries no solid weight as regarding his situation. He read the service, &c. as usual the next day. On Monday he wrote a letter to the provost, in substance, that he had long expected his conduct would at length be the cause of his removal from college, but that he had determined to wait for it; but that of late his *views of truth* and of his path of duty had changed; that he could no longer conscientiously discharge the duties and office of a minister of the Established Church, which he supposed involved in it a forfeiture of his collegiate situation; and that if so, he begged he might be considered as resigning, and his name be taken off the

books. When he went to deliver the letter he found a summons in his box to attend the board on Wednesday. The provost sent for him, and before Dr. Nash, expressed his concern, and even cried, begged he would reconsider his letter and take it back, assured him of the respect the board had for him, &c. &c. But in vain. The next morning (Thursday) Dr. Graves* was sent to him to urge the reconsideration, and to explain the motive of the board summoning him—namely, to expostulate with him on the necessity of being more regular. Still all entreaties were in vain; and accordingly the provost and the two deans *privately expelled* him, assigning, in the expulsion, the words of his own letter as to the establishment as the reason for the expulsion. Robinson *halted*, but, as I foretold, gave way, and on last Monday

* Late dean of Ardagh.

resigned also. Mr. W. has a church—a close church of forty-two men and women. C—— has a close church also. Mr. Hartley* is leaving Dublin. Mary's Abbey are a dead set, and no Gospel minister in the Establishment. Swift's alley (congregation) split, and thus are we poor Christians in this great city situated.† We may well say, 'pray for us.' There is not the slightest provision in the deed of Bethesda to prevent what has happened. Haldane has succeeded, the church is divided, and Sandemanian principles appear to triumph; one tenet is, opposition to all Establishments. Without the good of the puritan days, I fear we shall have much of the hypocrisy of some who professed puritan doctrines; and that the same persecution against all *real* religion will be excited, a *pretext* being now laid for the state interfering. Mr. W. called on

* The Moravian clergyman.

† Happily, this state of things no longer exists.

me—I wrote to him afterwards, and told him plainly that I considered he was duped into becoming the tool of a party, who had laid the snare for him—I urged him to make *all* his changes at once, and not, by again introducing at a future day fresh changes in matters of lesser moment, still keep the church of Christ distracted, and rend it by divisions of sects and parties, &c. &c.; in short, I gave him my mind, but very gently, and he thanked me.

"At a meeting to-day we have resolved to make the *last* stand for the old Gospel. God lead us into all truth, and save us from all error. Pray give me your sentiments fully, and that very soon.

"Yours affectionately,

"———."

After Mr. Mathias received the above letter, he wrote the following to Mr. Walker:

"My dear friend,

"As I had written to you some time ago, I should not trouble you again with a letter until I heard from you, were I not induced to do so by reports which I have lately heard. I was grieved when informed that you had at once left the college and the Establishment. This news distressed me, among other reasons, because I feared the step might be followed by some severe measures against the serious lads in college, and perhaps be the means of excluding the Gospel from it altogether. I was sorry also at your leaving a sphere, as I thought, of much usefulness; and though I am sure the Lord will certainly effect his own work, yet I am sorry when I see any thing occur which I fear may retard it. In writing to you now, my dear sir, I do not presume to enter into any discussion of the propriety of the step which you have taken, as I regard it to be the indisputable right, and

indeed, the duty of God's people to act in the manner which they think most consistent with their Master's will. But I am very desirous of knowing what is now to become of Bethesda chapel, as I am anxious about the use which shall be made of a place, that has hitherto been the only house in Dublin connected with the Establishment in which the Gospel has been statedly preached, and which, I candidly confess, I should be very sorry to see changed from the plan on which it was originally opened. My dear sir, if you do not think this inquiry improper, I hope when you have leisure you will favour me with a few lines on the subject; and though we are no longer brethren in the Establishment, I trust you will consider me as a brother in an infinitely more important relationship.

"I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

"B. W. MATHIAS."

"18th October, 1804."

Mr. Walker lost no time in answering this letter. The date of his reply is 20th October.

"My dear Mathias,

"Your solicitude about the chapel is very natural according to your present views, and I do not at all mean to dictate to the other trustees; this only I avow, that while I am connected with it, the Scriptural simplicity of Christian worship, and Christian preaching shall be aimed at, however imperfectly attained. If there were a syllable in the deed respecting the trustees in this matter, I would feel myself called on to resign a trust which I could no longer conscientiously hold; but there is not, and I say this, not only from what I have long known of the deed, but also, from the decisive opinion of a legal gentleman, who stakes his professional character upon it. I tell you as honestly that I have very little expectation of the continuance of the Gospel in that

house, if it continue in any connexion with the Establishment; for it is a connexion out of which I trust every faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ will e'er long be brought. This you deprecate—this I now pray for—gather thy scattered sheep, O Lord—scattered in a dark and cloudy day; gather us from among the heathen, that we may give thanks unto thy name, and show forth thy praise! You know, my dear Mathias, all arguments of expediency and usefulness must give way if the connexion be proved to be intrinsically unlawful. For its intrinsic lawfulness I long argued stiffly and sincerely. The contrary I am now as fully convinced of as I am that I hold this pen; but indeed it is not the arguments which dissenters brought that have convinced me. No, I could no more stand in connexion with the dissenters than with the Establishment. Just in proportion as any men see the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and how his subjects are

called to walk, in the same proportion they will see the force of the statement I shall make. I am therefore prepared for its being reckoned weak and foolish by all but the little flock who "dwell *solitary* in the wood." I shall rejoice to have increasing evidence that you are among that number; some of them will not for a time see, but it will become increasingly evident to which kingdom professors belong. One word concerning Bethesda school, about which I am prepared for Mr. Smith's making a great rout, perhaps filing a bill in Chancery against me; I am convinced that the interests of the school will not be the least injured, if they be not so by his making a fight; the collections for that Institution have been twice as great since the chapel came into my hands, as they were when it was in his. On the day of their sermon, if preached by a parson, the governesses can have what form of service they like, for on that morning I am willing to consider the

house theirs; but perhaps they will find the collection not less when the congregation is addressed by a man who does not pretend to be any thing but a Christian.

"By-the-by, Mrs. Walker has received a commission from Mrs. Smith to ask you to be their next public orator; she begs me to mention it to you. You may suppose I am, and shall be, very busy, working for my bread: this and economy must make me very stingy of correspondence—my postage latterly has stood me in about fifteen pounds a year. May you and yours, and dear Mr. Tighe, be blest by the Lord's best blessing.

"Yours truly,

"J. Walker."

This letter drew forth from Mr. Mathias the following answer:—

"My dear friend,

"I was this day favoured with your letter of the twentieth, in answer to which

I shall confine myself to one subject—Bethesda chapel. I am sensible there is nothing expressed in the deed which confines the chapel to the Establishment, but I think there is scarcely a single clause which occurs in it, that does not imply the intention of the donor to be, that the chapel should continue in connexion with the Established Church. It is unnecessary now, I think, to enter further into this subject, as I suppose the deed will be fully considered when the trustees meet. My dear sir, nothing but a sense of duty as a trustee could induce me to differ from you or oppose your wishes on this subject, and nothing but the same sense of duty prevents me from immediately resigning my trusteeship, that I might not be engaged in a business which must be so painful to the feelings of all concerned. I love you, my friend, indeed I do, and therefore it is unpleasant for me to differ from you, but we

must each follow our Master in the way which we judge the best; may he graciously accept us both, pardon and correct our errors, and where we differ, enable us to do so in love. One word about the charity sermon before I conclude. I must decline being the preacher, because it is a task to which I am inadequate; my chest is still very weak, so that I fear a sermon in Bethesda would materially injure me. When I preach now, it is but for a short time, and in a low voice, whenever I do otherwise it hurts me, so that I should be afraid to trust myself in Bethesda, especially on such an occasion. Besides this, I have such a dislike to preaching charity sermons, that I have resolved, if possible, never to preach another. A strong sense of duty could alone induce me to do so; and as there are others whose appeal to the public benevolence might be more efficacious than mine, I do not feel myself called on

to advocate the cause of the Institution at present. I must conclude. May the Father of mercies be with you, is the sincere prayer of

"Your obliged and affectionate friend,

"B. W. MATHIAS."

CHAPTER V.

Anxiety of Mr. Mathias respecting the state of religion in Dublin—Feels particularly for Bethesda—Second letter from his friend—Placed in a trying situation—accepts an invitation to Dublin—Extract of a letter from his friend—Correspondence between Mr. Mathias and Mr. Walker resumed—Arrives in Dublin—Letters from Mr. Walker—Mr. Walker visits his former pupil.

The anxiety and uneasiness experienced by Mr. Mathias, on account of the state of religion in Dublin was very great; but for Bethesda, in particular, he felt intensely. He was, from an early period of his life, attached to the chaplain—to the congregation—and almost to the house itself; there he had often sat with delight, receiving the precious truths of the Gospel from his kind and affectionate tutor; there he had joined in holy communion with the friends of his youth; and in that house he shut out the

world — its cares and enticements, and enjoyed the presence of his God and Saviour. His sensitive and affectionate heart was grieved for the alienation of friends to whom he had been long attached. His love for the Saviour and the souls of his fellow sinners caused him to lament that such obstacles were thrown in the way of the free course of the Gospel. The following letter certainly did not contribute to set his mind at ease:—

"24th November, 1804.

"My dear Mathias,

"I am induced again to trespass on your time, relative to the unhappy situation in which the religious part of the people of Dublin now are, with respect to the public means of grace. You are aware that Mr. Hartley leaves Dublin; who his successor may be, is unknown, and we can only *hope* that he may preach the Gospel. Plunket-street is a close church, and the preaching

in it is dogmatical declamation in favour of speculative points and forms, instead of upholding the great and essential truths of the Gospel. Swift's-alley congregation have split on the essential doctrines of the divinity and atonement. The seceders of Mass-lane have no meeting-house, and those of Back-lane no minister; and alas, the Gospel in Mary's-abbey is not that Gospel under which vital religion can hope to flourish; it is too often preached as a mixed Gospel, and too often prophesieth smooth things; and as to all other dissenting houses, gross error blinds the ministers, and gross darkness the people.* And if we turn our view to the Establishment, where shall we find any thing of the Gospel, except in the liturgy and prayers of

* The Christian has reason to rejoice that all this is most happily altered, and that pure religion is now taught from the pulpits, in Dublin at the least, both of houses in connexion with the presbyterian and other orthodox dissenters, and that the Establishment is favoured with faithful and zealous ministers.

the church? Not one to testify the truth as it is in Jesus, save an occasional sermon from any Gospel minister who may visit the city, and perchance obtain a pulpit. Is not this a dreadful situation for so populous and wicked a city to be reduced to? And although we have been, and are, chastised for our sins by this sore visitation, yet we trust the candlestick will not be utterly taken away from us. It behoves us, however, to be humbled under the dispensation; and in addition to our earnest supplication at a throne of grace, for light to arise out of that darkness in which the church and people of God now sit, to consider and devise the most likely means, under the blessing of the head of the church, to restore order out of confusion, and to afford to his people the blessings of a preached word, and the comforts of the ordinances of his sanctuary. Therefore, whatever our hands find to do, let us do it with all our might, heartily and without delay.

having our eye single, and of consequence losing sight of men, however much and highly we may have formerly esteemed them, and still love and pity them.

"You then as a trustee of Bethesda chapel stand (as do your brother trustees) in a very important station, and have at this peculiar period, a most important duty to discharge; you all (save Mr. W.) agree, that the intention of Mr. Smith was *unequivocally* to preserve that house in the Establishment; you all profess to think, that preserving it in that line is of importance to the interests of religion in this city; and that you all embrace and love its doctrines and approve its forms. Well then, why delay to restore these beneficial objects to the people of this city, by a prompt and conscientious discharge of your duty as trustees? Mr. Smith has, in a very sensible letter, and with the meekness of a Christian, confirmed your opinion of his intentions, and he has done more,

he has called on you as honest men to discharge that trust which he has reposed in you. His intentions are evidenced to a demonstration by those circumstances mentioned by him, and recited to you in Mr. G——'s circular letter; they have been also recited to Mr. Walker, and yet Mr. W. attempts to prove they were not his intentions. Why in the name of wonder, how is it possible that Mr. W. can assert that Mr. Smith did not intend that the chapel should remain in the Establishment. Surely it can only be with a view to evade fulfilling his own declaration, 'that if he thought his retaining the situation he has hitherto held in Bethesda, tended indeed to defeat Mr. Smith's intention in executing the deed, he would see it his bounden duty at once to retire; *and that although the deed should be found to fail ever so much of expressing that intention*;' that is honest speaking, and I would he had followed it up by allowing the force due

to the evidence given of Mr. Smith's intention, to enter with conviction to his mind. Now that the deed occurs, I should mention that he applied to me on its legal interpretation, I then wrote to him that, which I still hold, that the deed is from beginning to end silent on the subject of the form of service, or the qualifications of the trustees; and that nothing *in it* would of *necessity* render the service of the Establishment, or his being a minister of it, necessary; and I did further express an opinion (which I did, not knowing the extent of proofs adducible of Mr. S.'s intentions, or of the sentiments of the trustees, or the extent of the evil that would ensue by the change) that for any thing *in the deed*, I saw no reason why he should at once give up the chapel, and thereby lose a place for declaring and enforcing those truths which he held essential. At the same time that I disapproved of the change, and reprobated his new views as

destructive of the peace of the church. Now, the part of this opinion which I regret having given, I gave merely as a case between man and man, in utter ignorance of the circumstances attending the *donation* to him and others of the chapel; this subjects me to the charge of apparent inconsistency and temporizing, than which nothing is farther from me; but I also fear it has done mischief by countenancing him in his own mind, in retaining the chapel. I have retracted that view of it to his followers as often as I could since I was apprized of the strong fact, proving the intention of the donor, and which ought to have a conscientious influence on him; but separate from which I still hold the opinion I gave him. I have digressed too much, but I thought it a feature in the case, not to be omitted. But to return to Mr. Walker's letter: he further adds, 'that if he thought in his conscience that the interests of the

school must be injured by it, he would feel himself called on to withdraw, as he knows Mr. S. *did intend* to secure *its interests*.' Now surely, its interests, both moral and pecuniary, must be affected. Will the governesses *now* countenance the children in their attention to the preaching of the word, by their own attendance in the governesses'-seat in Bethesda, as heretofore? Surely not. A place where *no* form is observed, and where *all* forms are contended against, cannot meet their approbation. Again, will this not tend to damp their exertions in the moral instruction of the children? Surely it will. And will not these two effects tend to damp their zeal and attention to the pecuniary interests of the school? Surely they will. And will not both and all of these effects tend ultimately to undermine and wholly destroy the establishment of the school itself? Surely they will. Again, need we go so far in search of proofs of its interests being affected? Will any clergyman of the

Establishment venture, or be willing to preach in a house now devoted to the use of persons holding sentiments subversive of *every establishment and form*, whether in the national or dissenting churches? Surely not. Nor would Mr. W. be inclined, at least conscientiously, and consistent with his present plan, he could not be disposed to allow such a clergyman to preach there—then, what is to become of the charity sermon? *by the deed* it is appointed to be preached *there*, and surely, were Mr. Walker to preach it, (which is the only and *dernier resort*, consistently with the deed) the collection must be deficient by the deficiency which would naturally appear in the donors who would attend; and I see no way in which the interests of the school in this respect would not be injured, unless Mr. Walker would undertake to supply the deficiency from the common stock of his church. Now surely, these are loud calls upon Mr. Walker to retire—besides, Mr. Grace supplies

Mr. Walker in his answer to Mr. G—— with another reason why he should retire; speaking of dissenting houses, he says—'of such houses there are a variety, and places of worship are not difficult to be obtained by them;' and he adds, 'I shall hope that this one house which *seemed to be secured* for the preaching of the true Gospel connected with the Establishment, shall continue to be so.'—I also *know* that Mr. W. means, if continued chaplain, to violate the deed in smaller matters; for in an argument between him and me last night, he descended to contend against *pews*, saying, 'that as long as they remained, the *true* church were not sufficiently *outwardly* separated as a body, in one place, from unbelievers.' Now the deed expressly reserves one pew for the use of Mr. Smith and his heirs, and speaks of the pews being thrown open on the charity-sermon day, and of the appropriation of the rents arising from them; so that you see in these points the deed

would be frustrated, and surely, he who insists on every minutiæ of the word, ought to be careful to carry the minute parts of the trust into effect, which indeed has been violated already by the discontinuance of the organ, expressly given for, and connected in, the deed with the service in that chapel—so far I had written when yours arrived—which came seasonably to remind me of the object I proposed in writing, namely, the means by which the trust can be fulfilled, and the chapel restored to the plan on which it was by the deed founded, or at least upon which it was the donor's intention it should be founded—a plan absolutely necessary and highly expedient that it should be preserved in. A presentiment that some of the trustees would not effectually co-operate in fulfilling the trust, and that by their lukewarmness you might rashly resign, was one inducement to me to take up my pen; and although I had also my doubts that you would not

accept the chaplainey, I regret to have them confirmed by yourself. Allow me to expostulate with you a little on that head. Surely, my dear friend, the interest of true religion—the cause of your Master—is near your heart; to promote and forward that, was your object in entering the ministry; and, subordinate to that, or, as a mean of effecting that, you would wish to see vital religion flourishing in that church, of which you are a minister; and in the metropolis of that country which gave you birth. You cannot deny but that there are providential calls to ministers, to alter the plans which they had laid down for their future lives, in order to promote the interests of Christ's kingdom. Now, observe the low ebb to which religion in the Establishment is brought, when not *one* gospel minister in it is to be found in the metropolis. I can safely assert there is a call *to you* from *many* in this city; and it is their earnest desire that

you in particular should come amongst them; there is none other in this kingdom that they deem so fitted for this work—is not this a loud call? Do consider it, I beg of you. With respect to temporal matters, we are aware that you should be provided for—and I trust that that would be no objection. I would enter more at large upon it, but that I think it enough confidently to undertake that, without *your* having *any thing* to do with your hearers in money matters, that a provision equal *to all* your wishes, and regulated in a manner to meet your desires, *shall be made*. Do not be putting us off to this person in Ireland, or that in England—*you are the man:* no Englishman would, for a length of time, know the natural dispositions, &c. &c. of his hearers, so well as you would. Again, I beg of you to think of this matter. Should you alter your mind, and see your path of duty clear, so as to accept the chaplainey,

all difficulties will, in that case, be removed. But, if not, might you not see it your bounden duty to accept of it for *one or two months?* that also would remove the difficulties in part: we should then have the chapel restored, and have time to look out for a minister. If you wholly refuse the former, do not lightly refuse the latter. . . . . Mr. W. is not gone to Scotland; and it is evident the trustees will not *all* come to Dublin: therefore, should you, contrary to my expectation and hope, decline both plans, I would have *you begin* by a joint letter of all the trustees to Mr. Walker—either as a letter, or in the form of resolutions—asserting your conviction, as trustees, of the intention of Mr. Smith; of the violation of that intention; of your approbation of the doctrines and form of the Establishment; and your determination, as trustees, to preserve the chapel in that line; that Mr. W., having ceased to be a minister of

the Establishment, is *ineligible* to continue chaplain; that you will, as soon as an opportunity offers, appoint a chaplain, *who shall be a minister of the Established Church*, but that you conceive it contrary to *your duty*, as trustees, to allow Mr. W. to officiate *as a Dissenter* in the chapel, and therefore hope he will quietly resign it; and not, by his refusal, induce litigation, &c. In case you accept either of the first proposals, then a similar letter, altered according to that event, should be drawn up. I would have you do it by advice of friends in Dublin; forward it, signed by yourself, to Mr. Maturin, with directions to him to forward it, when signed, to Mr. Grace; and in his letter, let him direct Mr. Grace to forward it, signed, to any of those I have mentioned, who will get it signed by Mr. Lowe, and act on it accordingly. But do not on any account resign; that would be destroying the only prospect of success; for, as Mr. Walker says—'The

trustees *alone*, acting within the letter or spirit of the deed, have the *sole* dominion of the chapel;' and the result of a lawsuit by Mr. S. against Mr. W., would produce much ill blood, much triumph to the world against religion—and the issue be very doubtful.

"I should mention to you, that Mr. Grace, in his letter to Mr. G., consents to act and co-operate: but I fear your appointing a meeting in Dublin would not be attended by Mr. Maturin or him; yet Mr. Lowe, I doubt not, would attend; and then there would be two against one: but the plan I have suggested appears to *me* preferable. In case the trustees desert their duty, Mr. Smith is determined to file a bill.

"I have now only to add a few words, (having already wearied your utmost patience) on that part of your letter in which you ask—'How matters go on at Bethesda? who preaches there?' &c. Matters go on there

as might be expected, when men give themselves up to be led by the delusive imaginations of their own fancy. They have given up public prayer and singing, as well as the ordinance of the sacrament, &c.; and it is now wholly confined to exhortation, in which Mr. Walker and Phillips engage—the former expounds, after which the latter exhorts—and so they come together and separate, without calling upon the Lord to bless their word, or render it effectual. They have a meeting on Friday evenings to read and expound: at this meeting, *all* persons may attend and offer their opinions. I attended last night, and the Friday before: it is conducted in a very irreverent manner; and the object seems to be to triumph over, and laugh at a fallen objector, overcome by superior reasoning and subtle argument. But the absurdities advanced were so great, that I could not longer desist engaging in the argument, and bearing my testimony against

such gross errors and lamentable absurdities as I heard advanced. My eye was, I trust, single; and for two hours I was engaged in opposition to the united talent of Walker and Phillips. There were some unprejudiced persons present, who think I fully exposed the absurdity of their plan; and Mr. Walker admitted I said enough to induce him further to investigate the matter. I forced him out of every refuge, and compelled him to admit, that except one or two churches *now* in England and Scotland, he knew of none, since the apostles' days, who walked according to the apostolic rule. But, said he, 'it is a happy circumstance, that even after eighteen hundred years, a few are led to return to that rule.' Yes, I admit; but to make me rejoice with you in that, you must prove to me that *all* Christians, for eighteen hundred years, have been left in error, and that you are now the only church walking in that rule. But he fully asserted there was no

Christian church in Ireland, save his. I argued against the giving up of prayer. He said, if the believers could *all* sit in one place, so that it would be evident to unbelievers, that the former, in their prayers, did not join with the latter, &c., he would use public prayer; and that if he got the chapel it should be so. I replied, that the believers all sitting separate, would lead some who crept in amongst them, not believers, to rest in that very outward circumstance as one ground to conclude themselves in a safe state; and that suppose, as the apostles do, an unbeliever to come into the assembly, an utter stranger, he observes those whom he calls believers praying and singing, and he observes the unbelievers with whom he is seated singing and praying also—he joins in the singing, and says amen, at the end of the prayer; where then is that visible distinction between the two classes, unless, as Rowland Hill says, 'they mark the elect, or muzzle the unbelievers.'

In short, to enter into all the ridiculous, idle, and frivolous points which occupy their debates, and put out the essentials of the Bible, would occupy a volume; they lectured me at full length on my making light of outward distinctions, and said, that if *even a coat* would mark a believer as distinct from the world, it became a point of importance, and they would wear it.

"Now, my dear friend, will you lightly allow these absurdities to go on, when you have power to put a stop to them? Do arise and exert yourself. For my own part I am determined to do all that may fall to my lot in the business, convinced that unless all Christians from the apostles' time have been acting in a delusion, Mr. Walker and his followers are now in a gross one. That God may save us from error, and lead us into *all* truth, and enable us to live to His glory, is the sincere desire of my dear Matthias's affectionate friend,

"_____"

Mr. Mathias was now placed in a very trying situation. He found himself called on by an imperative duty to forsake the happy retirement he had hitherto enjoyed in the society of a rector to whom he was sincerely and warmly attached, and leave a people to whom he had been useful: add to this, the extreme weakness of his chest, in consequence of too frequent and incautious preaching, and excessive nervous debility: all united, made him fear to place himself in a situation, to which he would probably feel inadequate. His great humility and timidity caused him to feel these difficulties still greater; and the conviction that every conscientious step he took in the business must be in opposition to friends whom he greatly loved, produced in him an unwillingness to proceed, which was only overcome by a high sense of duty. He therefore determined to accept an invitation from a friend, and go to his house for a time, until they could settle the affairs

of Bethesda chapel. His friend wrote again to urge him to do so speedily. This letter is dated, December 1, 1804. In it he mentions that Mr. Walker and his followers had determined they would hold no Christian intercourse with any religious community except their own society. He then speaks of the impossibility of procuring any clergyman in Dublin to assist Mr. Mathias at the chapel; and states that a few friends would unite and invite some clergyman from England to take the place of assistant chaplain for two or three months. "Your friends are anxious to have you in town," he continues, "to consult with you; and they think you might procure other churches to preach in until Bethesda be given up to the trustees." He proceeds—"I understood Mr. Walker wrote to Mr. Smith, answering these facts on which he relied as a proof of his intentions, that the chapel should continue in the Establishment; and saying, that if Mr.

Smith would unequivocally assert that such was his intention, he would give it up at once. We have fears that there is another plan about the chapel, which would very seriously injure the cause of the Gospel in this city; but more of this when we meet.

"I beg you will think of every means of restoring true religion—the religion of the Bible—to Bethesda: if it be removed from that place we shall be all driven from post to pillar: some to follow one erroneous opinion, and some another; but the injury to the cause of divine truth will be so great, that I fear ages will not cure it. Quit yourselves then like men, and preserve your trust from encroachment on every side."

An extract from a letter of Mr. Walker is here given, as it bears on the subject which proved such a source of anxiety to Mr. Mathias's mind—Bethesda chapel.

"I was surprised to hear from you, that scarcely a single clause occurs in the deed that does not imply the intention of the donor, to confine the chapel to the Establishment. Mr. Smith and Mr. —— will be much obliged to you to make that out; for the only clause they have pretended to discover as implying that, is *one* about the organ and communion plate; and if this prove any thing, it proves that Mr. S. conceived an alteration might be made in the mode of performing divine service without at all affecting the tenure of the chapel."

In the same letter Mr. Walker recommended a clergyman as his successor in the chaplaincy, and says—"the trustees need not object to him on account of his being unmarried. In this they go upon the mistaken supposition that they have to trouble themselves with thinking about the Penitentiary; but this, being licensed to myself individually, is under my absolute and sole control; and, as in

case of my removal from the chapel, I do not mean to have any thing to do with Bethesda, so I will not allow the chaplain or trustees to have any thing to do with the Penitentiary. This communication will, I hope, remove some of your difficulties about choosing my successor."*

Here follows an extract from a letter of Mr. Mathias in reply.

"I must still differ from you respecting Mr. Smith's intention concerning Bethesda; perhaps I may have expressed myself too

* Mr. Walker did keep the Penitentiary for some time after he ceased to be chaplain of Bethesda; but a serious debt was incurred, and no means of liquidating it. The late J. D. Latouche, Esq. then kindly undertook the management of the institution. However, a great prejudice remained on the public mind, because the matrons belonged to Mr. Walker's society; and though no people could have acted more conscientiously, yet public opinion being strong against them, there was not sufficient needle-work and washing sent for the support of the women, and to defray other necessary expenses. The place was still more involved in debt, which could not be cleared off until a new arrangement was made.

strongly when I said, *his intention is implied in almost every clause of the deed.* But I still think his intention *is expressed in it.* Indeed, when I consider that Mr. Smith was attached to the Establishment, and that while the chapel was under his discretion it was connected with the Establishment; that when he gave up the chapel it was to ministers of the Establishment; that to them he gave an organ and other appurtenances of an Episcopal chapel, for the 'use and accommodation of said chapel, and the divine service used therein, and not otherwise'—these, I think, are the very words of the deed; that out of the revenues of the chapel he empowered them to give a salary to a minister, who was to perform divine service in the chapel, and also to an organist and clerk; that in this chapel he expressly retained a seat for himself and his wife, both members of the Establishment; and *that* the chaplain of that house was to instruct, in the principles of

religion, the children of the school under the patronage of the governesses, for whom also a seat was retained, and most of whom are members of the Establishment. When I consider these and other circumstances of a similar nature, I cannot hesitate to conclude that Mr. Smith intended the chapel to continue in connexion with the Establishment; and this conclusion has been confirmed, in my mind, by the express declaration of Mr. Smith lately communicated to me."

The following is an extract from Mr. Walker's answer:—

"It would be superfluous to continue the argument about Mr. Smith's *intentions* in making the deed, when I have referred the determination to his own assertions; only I would ask you how you can be so inaccurate in your statements as to say that 'the chapel, while under his direction, was connected with the Establishment,' when you know it was

licensed, during that time, as a dissenting chapel under the toleration act? You are perfectly accurate in quoting that clause in the deed, which conveys the organ, communion-plate, &c. &c. for 'the divine service used therein, and not otherwise.' But if this prove any thing, it proves that Mr. Smith conceived an alteration might take place in the mode of performing divine service, which would oblige the trustees to relinquish these articles, without at all affecting the tenure of the chapel. But, waving all this, surely you may be satisfied with my having left the decision to Mr. Smith himself. The other trustees have driven me to this, and upon them will be the responsibility, if a misconstruction should be permanently fastened on the deed, by Mr. Smith swallowing an assertion that I am satisfied is equally unsupported by both its letter and its spirit. I shall retire from the chaplainey and trust as soon as I receive Mr. Smith's letter, if it contain

the same assertion that you make for him. I remain, dear Ben, with sincere regard,

"Yours truly,

"J. WALKER.

"December 7, 1804."

Here the correspondence between Mr. Mathias and Mr. Walker closed, except one short note afterwards from the latter. Mr. Mathias determined to yield to the solicitations of his friends, and go to Dublin, at least for a month. He had expected to arrive there in December, but was obliged, by illness, to remain some time in Newry after leaving Rathfryland. He had received a letter from a friend, urging him to come as soon as possible—he says, "all friends here rejoice at the prospect of seeing you. Mr. Smith has not yet answered Mr. Walker's letter, and the *new church* has already divided about baptism," &c. &c.

Mr. Mathias arrived in the metropolis on the first of January, 1805. Those who

desired to uphold the scriptural and venerable Establishment gathered round him, anxious for his advice and guidance in the course to be pursued; but they were soon relieved by Mr. Walker sending in his resignation. The following note was received by Mr. Mathias the day after he came to town:—

"Dear Ben,

"Before I heard of your arrival yesterday I sent you a letter by post, as I did to each of the other trustees, containing my resignation, in consequence of a note I received on Monday evening from Mr. Smith. I have occupied that pulpit ten years and six months; may you be so blessed in it, that you shall relinquish it much sooner. Any time after this day you can have the keys, &c. of the chapel. Mr. Smith applied to me to give the deed to his nephew, Wilcocks, to be kept for the trustees. This, of course,

I declined. But I suppose it will be agreeable to all that I should put it into your hands. The construction you have fastened on it forbids me, or any one who will walk according to the precepts of the Word of God, to act under that deed. And wishing, as I do, your best profit, I hope yet to see you relinquishing the trust as I have done.

"Yours, dear Ben, affectionately,

"J. WALKER.

"Wednesday Morning."

When Mr. Mathias received this note he would gladly have called on the writer —for whom he always entertained the most sincere affection, and who had constantly acted towards him with kindness—but he was obliged to confine himself to the house, in consequence of suffering from a cold; and Mr. Walker came to see him; spoke to him affectionately, and again urged him to consider how very unscriptural was the

church to which both had been attached, but which he had been led to renounce.

As Mr. Mathias belonged not to a party, but viewed the subject with a clear understanding and unprejudiced judgment, all that his former tutor and friend said on the occasion, was urged in vain; and they separated with friendly feelings for each other; but, on Mr. Walker's part, with a determination to hold no religious intercourse.

CHAPTER VI.

Sermon for the Female Orphan School at Bethesda—Smallness of the congregation at Bethesda at first—Mr. Mathias returns to the country to arrange his affairs—Grief of the parishioners at his departure—He has new difficulties to encounter—The Hibernian Bible Society established—Congregation increases at Bethesda—Instances of the benefits of Mr. Mathias's preaching—Members of the Church of Rome avail themselves of his instructions—Priest K.—Mr. Mathias preaches in London—His preaching *extempore*—An instance of its great benefit—Method of preparing his sermons—His visits to the sick and dying in general much blest—An instance of this.

According to the deed by which the chapel was conveyed to the trustees, they were obliged to have the annual sermon for the benefit of the Female Orphan School preached on the first Sunday in February; and the choice of the preacher was left with the governesses. Mr. Mathias was requested by them to preach the sermon this year.* Great

* A.D. 1805

interest was made for the institution, as latterly, the funds had so much decreased, that it was necessary to leave eight vacancies unfilled; and still there was a heavy debt incurred. These circumstances were brought forward powerfully by the preacher; he pointed to the children who were still inmates of the school, and asked the congregation, if *these* also were to be sent away? representing the destitute state of the orphans who were anxious for admittance. The people were greatly interested: many stood up as the preacher proceeded; and several were observed having taken a note from their purse, then to add another, and another: and when the sum collected was counted after service, it was found sufficient both to liquidate the debt, and enable the governesses to complete the original number of children. As many strangers had attended in Bethesda that day, there was much inquiry made respecting the preacher. Who is that young

man? was the general question. From that time the congregation began to increase; and though many were offended at the truths which he taught, yet, such proofs were brought from the sacred Scriptures that they were the truths of the Bible—as he always quoted the book, the chapter, and the verse, when he repeated the words of Scripture—that their judgments were convinced; and, in numerous cases, the heart softened to receive the Gospel in its power and influence.

After a residence of nearly two months with his friend, Mr. Mathias determined to return to the country to arrange his affairs, previous to his permanently remaining in Dublin as chaplain of Bethesda. The institution had been restored to its original plan: some of the congregation who had left the chapel and attended elsewhere, returned; and the trusteeship, vacated by Mr. Walker, had been filled up by Dean Maunsell. The chapel requiring a general cleaning and

several repairs, this was judged the best time to have the house closed for that purpose; and a physician having been consulted by Mr. Mathias, pronounced that the weakness in his chest was not caused by any pulmonary complaint, but merely the consequence of incautious and excessive exertion, which would be cured by sea-bathing; and his friends rejoiced that all obstacles to his having accepted the chaplaincy were now removed.

The determination to paint and clean the chapel at this time, afforded an opportunity for observing the delicate feeling and sensibility of mind possessed by this truly humble Christian. There were in the front of the reading-desk, and also at the back of the pulpit, some paintings which he greatly disliked, not being suitable, as he thought, for the place. It was proposed by some who undertook the management of the cleaning, that these should be removed. When this was mentioned to him, he replied—"I shall

never consent to have them taken away, while dear Mr. Brooke, who painted them and liked them so much, is alive; I could not for a moment think of hurting his feelings." This was dictated by true Christian delicacy. He was always remarkable for avoiding whatever might give the least unpleasantness, unnecessarily, to any one, even to those who were harsh or unkind; but particularly for the Lord's people he felt such love, that it would have caused him much pain to do any thing that might give them the smallest sensation of uneasiness: and though he has often suffered from the want of this too-much-neglected Christian grace in others, he ever retained it to the last.

Before Mr. Mathias finally settled in Dublin, it was necessary for him to return for a time to his former parish in the county of Down. There his kind, affectionate heart was greatly pained: the poor people collected around him,

not one would be absent when he preached—though his humility and desire to exalt his Saviour, not himself, prevented him from alluding to his departure, or preaching what is called a "farewell sermon:" yet, as they knew he was about to leave them, the sobs of the congregation were audible; and one poor woman who had been for years confined to the house, and generally to her bed, was waiting at the church-door, supported by her husband, determined to say "farewell" to her dear pastor, as she never expected to see him—to whom she owed so much—again in this world. The exertion was too great for her; her life was soon after terminated here to enter into a happy eternity.

The husband of this poor woman was a linen-weaver. When he first became personally known to his pastor he was in great distress: his wife, to whom he was sincerely attached, was utterly unable to assist

herself, owing to long-continued illness; and this was a source of great expense to him, as there was then no dispensary where medicine could be procured. His loom lay idle, for he could not afford to buy yarn for his web. But still, though his poverty was so great as to leave him only a ragged and torn coat, and deprive him even of the comfort of a hat, he never was yet known to absent himself from the means of grace—the refreshing ordinances of God's holy house. He would, rather than lose the precious benefit of his dear pastor's instructions in the pulpit or the lecture, borrow a coat or a hat, and would repay this loan by doing some kindness to his neighbours, who assisted him with the means of appearing respectable at divine service. As soon as his revered pastor discovered the destitute condition of this Zionward traveller, and was convinced that he became so reduced in his worldly affairs without any blame being attachable

to him, he immediately determined to assist him to the utmost of his ability; and for that purpose collected among his friends a sum sufficient to procure decent clothing for himself and his wife, as also a supply of yarn for his loom; and his worthy and humane rector appointed this humble servant of God clerk to the church, by which he was enabled for the future to live in comfort.

As it was generally known that their much-loved minister was about to take a final leave of the place, the parishioners came crowding round him with heart-felt expressions of sorrow and regret for his intended departure, and when the time arrived for his return to Dublin, several of them requested that he would allow them to bring their carts to carry his books, trunks, &c. &c.; and some earnestly entreated that he would take them with him to town, saying, they never could be so happy after he had left them.

When Mr. Mathias and his colleague, the Rev. W. Thorpe, first began to preach at Bethesda,* the congregation was very small, scarcely more than fifty persons attending; some who had formerly been in the habit of going to the chapel, as their constant place of worship, used occasionally to come in at the commencement of the sermon and remain for a time; but if the preacher should urge on his hearers the necessity of holiness of heart, and press on the believer the value and excellence of good works, as being according to the commands of God, and furnishing proofs that he was made "a new creature in Christ Jesus," they would immediately leave the chapel, declaring this was legal doctrine, and not such as a Christian could listen to. However, several, owing to the faithful preaching they heard there, were led to consider more seriously the true doctrines

* A. D. 1805.

of the Bible; to judge for themselves, without being influenced by names or parties; and these, after a time, renounced the novelties they had embraced and returned to the good old way.

The numbers that now began to frequent Bethesda were very great. Some came at first from motives of mere curiosity; others, because they liked the music, or heard that the service was performed with solemnity; but these were, in most instances, kept there as stated hearers, by love for that Gospel which they had formerly slighted, but which had now reached their hearts.

After Mr. Mathias had been for some time settled in Dublin, and had become better acquainted with the state of religion there, he found that many who professed to love the Gospel were not fully living according to its precepts, particularly, spending much money and wasting much time in entertainments. This practice he opposed

with gentleness, but firmly: he never could be personal; it would have been contrary both to his feelings and his judgment to give offence needlessly to any one; but by speaking in general terms, and showing by his conduct that he disapproved of practices inconsistent with the life of a true Christian, he induced many to give up the habits into which they had fallen, perhaps more from thoughtlessness than intention.

The following instance may be adduced as a proof of the benefits resulting from this practice:—One day a lady called on him and said, she came to thank him for his sermon of the previous evening. "My friend, Mrs. F——, and I," she observed, "went to hear you preach. We dined in a large party, where there was a splendid entertainment and much trifling conversation, though the master of the family and his wife occasionally attend at Bethesda; we did not enjoy the society of the persons we met, but we did

not fully see the inconsistency of their conduct. Mrs. F—— being weary of their company, said to me, 'let us withdraw quietly, and go to Bethesda.' Your sermon seemed as if intended for us; had you really known the state of our minds, you could not have said more exactly what we required. We are both convinced that the excessive waste of time which must be caused by these parties, and the sums of money spent, are inconsistent with the Christian profession; and at Mrs. F——'s request I have come to thank you for pointing out errors into which we had fallen inadvertently. We know you could not possibly have heard our conversation, and we are certain you would never be personal, therefore, your remarks came with greater force, as the decided opinion of one whose Christian principles and practice we respect."

Mr. Mathias had soon new difficulties to encounter, for which he was not prepared;

and which he was, from his great timidity and disinterestedness, very unfit to meet. As, according to the deed of trust, no trustee could receive any emolument from the funds of the chapel, he must either have vacated his trusteeship, or have depended on the precarious contributions of individuals who were *voluntarily* to give what they pleased. When he was requested to take the chaplaincy of Bethesda, a promise was given, that a very liberal collection should be made for him without any trouble on his part. This plan, however, did not succeed; and after sinking some hundred pounds of his own property, which he had hoped to have preserved for his family, he was obliged to give up the trusteeship, and receive a salary from the funds of the chapel. He was very unwilling to cease from being a trustee; since, as there was not even one of them living in or near Dublin, he could not consult them on the affairs of the chapel without great loss

of time and much expense. However, he had not sufficient means for the support of an increasing family, and he could no longer hesitate.

In disposition he was liberal, and the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, obliged him to be even more so than prudence would dictate. Holding a prominent position in the religious world in Dublin, he was very much consulted by those who felt anxious to promote the spiritual welfare of their fellow-creatures; and when any Christian minister visited the metropolis, or private individuals, who wished to enjoy religious society, came to the city, they always made a point of bringing letters of introduction to him. Strangers must be received with hospitality,* and increased expense was the consequence.

While receiving all who loved "the Lord

* Romans xii. 13; 1 Peter iv. 9.

Jesus Christ in sincerity" as brethren, he highly valued the privileges enjoyed by the members of the Established Church. He had witnessed many injurious effects arising from *separation:* that brotherly love which should characterize the Christian was too often interrupted by it. In many instances, points of discipline appeared to be given more prominence than their importance demanded, but which was pre-eminently due to the vital truths of the Gospel. He gives an instance of this in a letter to a friend, dated Oct. 1807:—

"They are all divided at the Blackrock Chapel. Mr. B——, who preaches there, is quite of Mr. H——'s opinions. Mr. W—— and Mr. B——e oppose him: some are attached to one side, some to the other. M—— and M. B—— are gone to A—— to convert Mr. K——'s church. I bless God for the Establishment!"

A few years subsequent to the date of the foregoing letter Mr. Mathias went to reside at Belmont, about a mile distant from the village of Blackrock. The chapel there had been closed for some years, and no divine service was performed in it by any denomination of professing Christians. At that time it does not appear that evening service was held in the church of the parish in which Belmont was situated. Several persons expressing a wish to have a second service on the Sunday, the idea suggested itself to Mr. Mathias, to make use of a large parlour in his house for holding a lecture every Sunday evening; he proposed it to the Rev. W. Thorpe, who at once agreed to lecture there with him alternately.

A short time after, in the summer of 1814, the Rev. W. Thorpe went to lodge at Blackrock; he there witnessed the numbers who came to reside during the

bathing season, and also the multitudes who flocked out on the Sundays, to spend that time in folly and vice which ought to be devoted to the service of God; and he felt anxious that an opportunity should be afforded them of hearing the Gospel faithfully proclaimed. The parish church was at some distance from Blackrock, and this was sufficient to form an excuse for those who desired to make the Sabbath a day of amusement. He described to the subject of our memoir the scenes he had witnessed, and expressed a wish for the spiritual benefit of the numbers who frequented the village and its neighbourhood. They both agreed that it would be most desirable to obtain the use of the chapel which had been so long closed. The attempt was accordingly made: some friends uniting with them, the house was purchased and placed in the hands of trustees, who were all members of the Established Church; and it was then opened

as an Episcopal chapel; Mr. Mathias and the Rev. W. Thorpe officiating there alternately every Sunday, without taking any remuneration from its funds.

It was soon filled—numbers rejoicing that an opportunity was presented to them of statedly worshipping within a house which was consecrated for the performance of those sacred rites which they had been accustomed to revere from their childhood; while some who were led at first to frequent it because others did so, remained to pray with their hearts, and to value the message of free salvation through a crucified Redeemer. So great were the multitudes who thronged to this house of prayer, that it was found necessary to provide increased accommodation for them. By a partial extension of the original building, and the erection of a gallery, two hundred additional sittings were obtained. After some time the Rev. W. Thorpe went to England, and Mr. Mathias,

to reside in Dublin; their labours therefore at this chapel ceased, and other chaplains officiated. Many years after, when Mr. Mathias was entirely laid aside from ministerial duties, a person in the neighbourhood, who had attended his preaching at the Blackrock chapel, declared on her death-bed, that to his preaching, under God, she owed the assurance she then enjoyed, that God had, for Christ's sake, pardoned all her sins.

This chapel, which is now best known by the appellation of "Carysfort chapel," has, since that time, become a large and goodly building—its former dimensions having been found entirely too small for the crowds who flocked every Sabbath, and also, to the lectures on week-days held within its walls.

In the year 1839, an additional building was raised. Mr. Mathias, as one of those who had been most solicitous for the re-opening of that house, was requested to

lay the foundation-stone of the new fabric. To this he willingly consented,* though encompassed with those infirmities which had laid him aside from public duty. But the event was one fraught with peculiar interest for him. He had contributed to its being established as a constant resort for worship, as an episcopal chapel — he had proclaimed there for some years the joyful tidings of salvation—the very house was dear to his memory—and now, after many vicissitudes in its history, he saw it, in his declining years, flourishing as the cedar of Lebanon: he had known it small as the *mustard seed*— he beheld it *now* spreading forth its branches, beneath whose welcome shade immortal souls might sit, and enjoy "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

At the time Mr. Mathias and the Rev.

* This interesting event was the *last* public act of his life

W. Thorpe became chaplains of Bethesda, the only society in Dublin, which was connected with the Established Church, and seemed to have any care for immortal souls, was, "The Society for discountenancing Vice," &c., but at that time it excited comparatively little interest, and did not meet with the support it so fully merited, and which has since made it so useful. This was much regretted by the subject of our memoir. Before he left the country, he had found great difficulty in procuring Bibles and Testaments for those to whom he wished to give them, or for any of the peasantry who were willing to purchase them; and now that he had removed from that part of Ireland where the sacred Scriptures are most prized, he felt anxious to create a desire for them among the lower class in other parts of the kingdom. He was encouraged to hope this might be effected, by having known the benefit

resulting from the efforts made by a clergyman in Kilkenny, who collected old Bibles in England, which he brought to Ireland for distribution. Several of these he had given to Mr. Mathias, to the use of those who he might find required them. For the purpose of creating a desire in the minds of the people to possess the word of God, he determined to form a tract from "the life and writings of St. Peter," in the very words of Scripture. This was published, and eagerly received: many of the hawkers who travelled through the country bought it, to sell in the places whither they carried their goods; and many persons to whom they offered it, would willingly have given double the price charged for it, rather than not possess the tract.

When he found that this small portion of Scripture was so well received, he thought it possible that Bibles and Testaments might likewise be acceptable. He spoke to a few

friends* on the subject, who agreed that it would be most desirable to make an effort to have the sacred Scriptures sent through the country, at so low a price, that even the poorest people might be able to procure a copy. Accordingly, the ministers of different denominations in Dublin who professed to value the word of God, were invited to meet in Bethesda, and eleven persons assembled in the governesses' pew, who all entered warmly into the wish of the promoter of this meeting, and determined to support his plan with all their influence. A circular letter was drawn up and sent to different clergymen and laymen, and a meeting was held at the Royal Exchange, on the 10th of November, 1806, the late Lord Belvedere in the chair. The Rev. B. W. Mathias and the Rev. W. Thorpe were appointed joint secretaries, and they soon had the happiness of seeing,

* The Rev. W. Thorpe, the late Rev. Walter Stephens, and the late Bernard Shaw, Esq.

through their active exertions, the cause advance, branches established, and the circulation of the Scriptures annually increase. They continued to act in concert for the promotion of the society's interests, until the year 1817, when the Rev. W. Thorpe resigned the secretaryship, previously to his leaving Ireland. The then Archbishop of Dublin, Lord Normanton, became patron, and presented the society with a donation of one hundred pounds.

For some time the society proceeded quietly, and many clergymen and dissenting ministers assisted in distributing the sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, through the country. Some of the bishops joined the new society, and were chosen vice-presidents; but, a few years after, great opposition arose; the bishops gradually withdrew from it, with the exception of the late Archbishop of Tuam, who remained to the last, the steady friend of a society, estab-

lished for the sole purpose of supplying the word of God, as it was given by its great Author, without any comment from man.

The present state of the Hibernian Bible Society, which has weathered all the storms of opposition and persecution, and, like the lordly oak of the forest, has rooted itself more firmly, and spread its branches through the length and breadth of Ireland, must prove to all who are not blinded either by prejudice or determined resistance to this invaluable institution, that the Lord has taken it under his peculiar care, and overcome obstacles which only his power could remove.*

But this faithful minister of Christ had soon the happiness of experiencing the truth of the promise, that "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." His upright and Christian conduct, his meek and holy life,

* The Hibernian Bible Society was established *one* year subsequent to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

forced conviction on the conscience, that the religion which he taught was the religion to be found in the Scriptures of truth. Prejudice and opposition gradually wore away; many young clergymen became decided and faithful preachers of the Gospel. At first, when Mr. Mathias heard of one, and then of another, who had boldly stepped forward, in defiance of ridicule, to preach a crucified Saviour as the sole cause of a sinner's salvation, he used to note down their names in his pocket-book; but after some time he gave up the practice, saying, "we have now a host of warriors, I have no room to write so many names."

Though the date of the following letter is some years subsequent to the period in which the foregoing observation was made, yet, as it tends to confirm the previous remark respecting the increase of faithful preachers in the Establishment, it is inserted here.

"Dear Sir,

"I have been from home for nearly three weeks, which, I hope, will apologize for my not sooner answering your letter. It gives me much pleasure to witness the good feeling which is prevailing at present among the young clergymen in the Established Church, and which is expressed in your letter; and it is my daily prayer that God would increase and extend it more and more.

"There is a passage of Scripture which, I conceive, suggests a compendious examination as to our views of the Gospel—'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.'—Hosea, xiii. 9. Do we feel this to be the case with ourselves, that we are ruined beyond our own power of recovery, and that our help is in him only, who of God is made to all who believe in him, 'wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption?' —1 Cor. i. 30. It is the influence of divine grace to empty us of ourselves, that we

may be filled with the fulness of Christ, and to make us nothing, that God may be all in all.

"You are a happy man who can command five hours a-day for study; I would urge you much to make use of them, for you will find hereafter that you will not have so much time for reading. Particularly, let me urge you to the study of the Scriptures; they are the grand source of information, and speak to the heart in a way that other books cannot. I would also recommend much to you the careful perusal of the Homilies of the church, they are *old* divinity, and, as far as I have seen, the *old* is the best. A very valuable work has been published in London by the Rev. Leigh Richmond, entitled, 'The Fathers of the English Church,' in eight volumes octavo. It contains the most valuable tracts of our reformers, and is indeed a valuable theological library.

"In the study of the New Testament you

will be much assisted by reading it in the Greek; and the Hebrew (especially without points) is of such easy acquisition and so useful to a student of the Old Testament, that it should not be neglected. But, above all things, let me recommend prayer to you, it is the life and the strength of the soul—'pray without ceasing.'

"I am not a good correspondent, but shall be very happy indeed to hear from you, and shall have much pleasure in writing to you when I can; and should you at any time come to Dublin, I should be happy to see you here. May God bless you, and keep you, and make you a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

"I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

"B. W. MATHIAS.

"Belmont, 10th October, 1820.

"To the Rev. John Hare, Glebe-house,
"Castlepollard."

It is remarkable how the varied talents of this gifted man were suited to reach the hearts and understandings of all his hearers. Children of six and seven years of age have received, under his instructions, impressions, which have deepened as they advanced in life, and have increased until they ended in eternal glory. A lady, on her death-bed, requested her husband to convey a message to this zealous servant of God: she wished him to be informed, that when a child of six years old she heard a sermon from him at Bethesda, which produced such an effect on her, that she never lost the impression it had made; and she was then happy in the enjoyment of those truths which she had first learned from him.

More instances of the benefit of his preaching to very young persons might be mentioned: one shall suffice. It is that of a young man who is now a missionary, sent by the Church Missionary Society to India. In a

letter which he wrote to his loved and respected pastor, and which was received by him only a few months previous to his death, he says:—"In Bethesda I was early taught those truths I am now endeavouring to teach others in this far distant land. The great day, which shall make known all secrets, alone can tell how many are the little streamlets that have had their origin, if I may so speak, in Bethesda, and have flowed to the north and south, to the east and west."

Many servants, and persons with little education, have heard him with profit and pleasure. It has been remarked by some of them, that he made every thing so plain it was impossible not to understand his discourse; and while those uneducated persons and children were able to comprehend his instructions, some of the finest and most cultivated minds listened with delight to his oratory, and many received into their hearts the truths which he taught.

The following instances have been selected from among the many that might be adduced, to prove the great benefit derived from his preaching.

A gentleman who had long made a very strict profession of religion, but entertaining rather melancholy views on the subject, was induced to go to Bethesda; he profited so highly by what he heard there, that he made it his stated place of worship. Having been steadfast in his attendance for some years, he was at length visited with a disease which eventually proved fatal. During his illness he was constantly visited by his faithful teacher, whose conversation and prayers afforded great gratification and rich consolation to the dying man; shortly before his death, while thanking his much loved friend and pastor for his comforting visits, he said to him—"Before I heard you preach, I knew not the character of God; I thought him a hard taskmaster; I was trying to work out

some way of salvation for myself; but you taught me that 'God is love:' from you I learned that salvation is *free*, and that the chief of sinners is invited to come and partake of it,—that the blessed Jesus takes away our sins, and makes over his righteousness to us—and *that all the fitness he requires, is that we have need of him.* Thanks to my gracious Saviour that I was ever brought to hear you; and thanks, abundant thanks, to him who gave himself, the just for the unjust, and who has brought me, a poor sinner, to my God, and enables me, in full confidence and humble love, to call him, 'Abba, Father.' This rejoicing Christian only survived a short time after making this declaration—both of the happy change that had taken place in his religious views, and of the full assurance of his hope in the finished work of Christ.

A young man who had been educated in deistical principles, was persuaded by some

of his connexions to accompany them to Bethesda for the purpose of hearing Mr. Mathias preach. Possessing a talented and intelligent mind, the chaste oratory and persuasive eloquence of the preacher highly gratified him; he attended his chapel a second time, was much struck by the clearness of his reasoning, and convinced by the solidity of his arguments. A friend presented him with a copy of the sacred Scriptures, he studied it closely and prayerfully; its perusal was greatly blest to him; his deistical principles were overthrown; the truths that he heard from the pulpit soon reached his heart: "old things passed away, all things became new." The power of that divine religion which he had embraced to prove a source of consolation in the hour of trial, and the influence which it possessed over his heart, were now to be put to the test. A disease had been lurking in his constitution which soon showed its fatal symptoms: his

body gradually declined, but his soul grew stronger in the Lord; his hope of eternal happiness became firmer and brighter; he was enabled to cast himself in the fullest confidence on his God, and all doubts of his acceptance with him were removed. Mr. Mathias regularly attended him during the progress of his last illness; and this young man, who had been brought up in the deistic scheme, died a happy Christian, rejoicing in Christ Jesus as *his* Saviour!

While the preaching and instructions of this venerable man were thus eminently blest to those who professed the pure faith of Protestantism, they were not confined to those of his own creed: many members of the Church of Rome gladly availed themselves of his advice and teaching. Among these were several priests, some of whom came up from the country, where they had been led to the serious consideration of that most important of all subjects — religion. They

were generally solicitous to conceal their anxiety respecting this momentous matter, while in their own parishes; as they were well aware they should suffer much persecution, both from their own relatives and the neighbouring priests. These inquirers ventured to attend Bethesda in the evening, in the hopes of hearing the truth without being discovered. They never failed, however, to call on him for the purpose of conversing with him on the subject which so much engrossed their thoughts—the religion of the Scriptures. As Mr. Mathias had a very excellent library, they enjoyed the privilege of consulting his books; and this truly Christian minister earnestly and carefully pointed out, and endeavoured to impress on their minds, the leading and influential doctrines of the Gospel. The consequence of this useful course was, that some were established in the faith, who, previous to their having become acquainted with him, were

wavering and unsteady. Among those who came to converse with him was a lady, who had been brought up most strictly by her parents, in the peculiar dogmas of the Romish religion. She was a person of very superior mind, and conscientious principles; doubts respecting the truth of that religious system which she had hitherto professed, now presented themselves; she determined to examine for herself, and for this purpose procured a Bible; she had gone a few times secretly to Bethesda, and had heard a religion of a very different nature taught there, from what she had been accustomed to hear; she compared both with the word of God, and the result was—she became a *Bible Christian*. Mr. Mathias remarked, that he never had met with any one who gave more sensible and cogent reasons for leaving the church of Rome, and embracing the faith of Protestantism, than this lady did.

As he was sitting with his family one day

after dinner, a note was brought to him, written on a small piece of paper, and evidently in haste: it contained a request that he would meet the writer on some waste ground, commonly called the Circus, at the head of Eccles-street—the street in which he then lived. The evening was closing in, and the note had a very suspicious appearance. The servant said, that the man who left it seemed anxious to conceal his person. Mr. Mathias, therefore, took no notice of it. Very shortly after, the same man called for an answer. The servant had been desired to say, that if the bearer of the note called again, his master should be glad to see the person who wrote it in his house, but that he must decline going out to the Circus to meet him. This message was duly delivered by the servant; and a young priest was ushered into the study. He proved to be Priest K——, who soon after this suffered much persecution from his relatives, and

even more so from some priests, who contrived to spirit him away, and keep him for a time closely concealed; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, he remained steady to his profession. Previously to his being spirited away, he had frequent interviews with Mr. Mathias, who had used every endeavour to establish him in the doctrines of divine truth, as taught in the sacred Scriptures. He was eventually delivered from his place of confinement, and freed from the persecution which he had endured from his relations, and from his former associates in the priesthood.—Many additional instances might be mentioned, were they not too numerous for insertion.*

* It would appear probable, that from the numbers of the Romish persuasion, both clergy and laity, who came to him for instruction, the subject of this memoir was induced to present to the public his work, entitled—"*Vindiciæ Laicæ: or, the Right of the Laity to the Unrestricted Reading of the Sacred Scriptures, Vindicated*." And also, previously to writing the above work, to engage as an editor and large contributor to a periodical, called—"The Advocate

We are induced to insert the following letter, which was found among the papers of the Rev. B. W. Mathias, as, from the nature of its contents, it seems the most suitable place for its introduction; probably, it may have been written to a relative, as one of his mother's sisters had been married to a Roman Catholic.

" My dear ———,

" I embrace the opportunity which a short respite from business affords me, to hold with my friend the only intercourse, which his absence from our native country will allow me to enjoy.

" When I took up my pen to write to you, innumerable recollections of your affec-

of the Primitive Church." His " Compendious History of the Council of Trent," was the last work connected with the Romish controversy, published by him, but owing to his being attacked by illness, he was unable to complete it, by the addition of *his own remarks* on the decrees and canons which he had been drawing up.

tionate kindness crowded on me; but, I can assure you, that for none did I feel more grateful than for your frequent and earnest endeavours to induce me to adopt, what you considered a sounder creed than mine; and to join what you regarded as a more Christian communion than that in which I had been brought up. In these efforts I saw more than the expressions of a mere worldly friendship and kindness. I perceived a desire on your part, that our friendship should be more permanent and happy, than it could be in this transitory world of sin and sorrow; and that it might be lasting and blissful as that eternity of happiness, to which you consider your church to be an unerring guide.

"The only return I can make for your kind solicitude respecting my eternal happiness, is to indulge in the same feeling for yours; and, perhaps, I cannot better express that, than by assigning to you at large the reasons which operate on my mind, to prevent my

becoming a member of the religious community to which you belong. In doing this, it is my earnest prayer, that I may be enabled to lay before you such facts and reasons as shall, by the blessing of God, induce you to re-consider the grounds of your faith, and to form, at least, a more favourable opinion of your friend's creed.

"The first thing which influences me, is this—that, whether my church be altogether right or not, it appears to me most obvious, that in the points of difference between us, your church is decidedly wrong. This opinion rests on facts; or, perhaps, I should rather say, on a comparison of two facts, viz.—of what Christianity was at first, and of what your church is now. The earliest authentic source from which I can know any thing of Christianity, is the New Testament. I have examined this with some degree of attention; and I must declare, I cannot see in it the religion of your church,

but the reverse of it. I here find that the Author of Christianity did not intend that any one of his apostles or disciples should be superior to another, or usurp authority over him. 'The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.'—Matt. xx. 25, 26. And the very same sentiment he urged, when he knew his disciples were contending who should be the greatest.—Luke xxii. 24—26. In perfect agreement with this direction of our Lord, I see none of the apostles claiming superiority over the others, but all acting as equals. St. Paul, though not received into the apostolic body until after the resurrection of Christ; yet, having been appointed to the office by our Lord, considered himself as 'not a whit behind' the chiefest even of the apostles, who had long been the Redeemer's followers and particular friends.—2 Cor. xi. 5, and xii. 11.

By the way, if there were but one chief apostle, St. Paul must be incorrect, for he speaks of them in the plural. St. Peter assumes no higher honour than that of being like others—'an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.'—1 Pet. v. 1.

"But your church presents the complete reverse of this: it raises one apostle above the rest; claims for its bishops, as his successors, a supremacy over all other bishops and churches; and has even gone so far as to assert, that it is necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Pope.

"On reading the New Testament, I find the Divine Author of our religion instituting two simple, but significant, ceremonies, to be of continual standing in his church—baptism, and the Lord's supper. Nothing else does the word of God mention, as by him appointed. But, when I come to your church, I find five other things placed on the same footing with these, and equally called sacra-

ments.—One of these ceremonies was instituted the night before he was betrayed, directing his followers to observe it in remembrance of him. And in his last conference with his disciples, he commanded them to continue the observance of the other which he had previously established, saying to them—'Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'—Matt. xxviii. 19. These two simple institutions were intended to be, in his church, a perpetual memorial of what was accomplished by his death; when from his pierced heart there 'came thereout blood and water.'—John xix. 34. The one, the emblem of atonement; the other, of purification: thus showing continually, that He 'gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Tit. ii. 14.

"The Scriptures present to us nothing

else of a superior nature instituted by our Lord, or by him commanded to be observed. Matrimony was instituted at the creation of man in Paradise. Penance, or repentance, must have been in existence as soon as our first parents were humbled for their sins; and it belonged to the patriarchal church, as well as to the Christian religion. And holy orders must have existed as soon as any one was set apart to 'minister about holy things:' so that if it be proper to call these sacraments at all, it is manifestly absurd to call them *sacraments of the new law*; for they were all in existence ages before our Lord came into the world. The same may be said of confirmation, which has been in existence as long as a blessing was conferred by the laying on of hands, or as long as this ceremony was observed, when praying for a blessing on another; and that is at least as long ago, as when Jacob laid his hands on the sons of Joseph, and blessed them.—Gen. xlviii. That

was nearly seventeen hundred years before the birth of Christ.

"It is most manifest also, that extreme unction was not instituted by our Lord; for he never anointed any sick person with oil himself, or gave any directions, that we know of, to his disciples to do so; and when afterwards we find them doing this, which appears to be a common practice of the day, it was not to prepare a dying person for another world, but to restore those who were sick to health.—Jas. v. 14, 15.

"When I read the Bible, I find our Lord instituting *two* rules, which have since been called sacraments: when I turn to your church, I find these increased to *seven*.

"When I examine the New Testament with reference to the subject, I observe, that one of the two positive institutions of our Lord—the commemoration of his death—has something totally different from what is taught and practised respecting the same institution

in your church. The Scriptures tell me he appointed, that in remembrance of his body, which was to be broken for us, and his blood, which was to be shed—bread was to be eaten, and wine drunk: but in your church, I can find nothing of this nature at all. There is nothing drunk by the laity, for the cup is not given to them; and what they eat, they are taught not to regard as bread, but as the real body and blood of Christ. So that in your church there is neither bread eaten, nor wine drunk; yet our Lord appointed the wine to be drunk when he instituted the sacrament; for he said, 'drink ye *all* of it.' Matt. xxvi. 27. And St. Paul teaches us that the wine was drunk, as well as the bread eaten, in his time; for he says, 'as often as ye shall *eat this bread*, and drink this chalice, ye shall show the death of the Lord until he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the

body and the blood of the Lord; but let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that chalice.'—1 Cor. xi. 26—28. Thus, you see, that according to your own translation, which I have now quoted, St. Paul teaches us, that drinking was as essential to the due commemoration of our Lord's death as eating: but with you there is no drinking, for the cup is withheld from the laity; and what was eaten, was bread; and what was drunk, was wine: but with you, neither bread nor wine are taken, for they are changed into the real body and blood of Christ, according to your church's doctrine of transubstantiation.

"When I read the New Testament, I find the founder of Christianity discouraging every attempt to forward his cause by force. I find him, indeed, preparing his followers for *suffering* persecution, but not for inflicting it. When his disciples, James and John, indignant at the inhospitable manner in which

he was treated by the Samaritans, said—'Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, as Elias did?—he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'—Luke ix. 54—56. When St. Peter used the sword for his defence at the time he was taken, he said to him—'Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.'—Matt. xxvi. 52. And at the bar of Pilate, he declared—'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.'—John xviii. 36.

"Your church, my dear friend, reverses all this, and asserts a right to persecute, even to death, those who will not submit to

her decisions. Even to the present day this claim is asserted. The note on Deut. xvii. 8, in the Douay Bible, is as follows—'Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the church-guides of the Old Testament, in deciding without appeal all controversies relating to the law; promising that they should not err therein, and *punishing with death such as proudly refused to obey their decisions; and surely he has not done less for the church-guides of the New Testament.*'* I shall spare your feelings and my own, the recital of the many instances in which the Church of Rome has acted on this claim to its utmost extent.

"When I examine Christianity, as described in the New Testament, I find it to be a religion which man is called upon to receive, on rational inquiry and investigation, on choice, and not compulsion. It was thus

* This note is found in the edition of your Bible, printed at Edinburgh *in the year* 1805.

our Lord proposed his religion to his auditors; and his apostles acted in the same manner. It is true, they declared, that 'he that believeth should be saved; and that he who believeth not, should be damned.'—Mark xvi. 16. He appealed to their reason; to the Scriptures, which they acknowledged to be the Word of God; and to facts which they believed, or of which they were eye-witnesses. He addressed them as accountable beings, who, since they were to answer for themselves to God, should judge for themselves on the most important of all subjects—*religion.*"

This letter was found among the papers of the late Rev. B. W. Mathias, written in his own hand, and with his own corrections and alterations. But there is no clue by which it can be discovered on what occasion it was written.

In the year 1820, this eminent minister

was invited to preach in London for the Church Missionary Society; some time after, the Rev. Edward Bickersteth* wrote to a friend in Dublin; he says:—

"I take the opportunity of saying how very greatly we feel obliged to Mr. Mathias for his most valuable aid. It was one of the most animating and encouraging missionary sermons I ever heard; and, I am persuaded, will not only maintain and increase the zeal of those already engaged in the cause, but stir up many to see its vast magnitude and infinite moment to the well being and happiness of the world."

The following letter, written by an intimate and dear friend of the subject of our memoir, is given here, as it refers to another sermon which he preached in London in aid of the London Missionary Society. It will be read with interest by all who knew and

* Mr. Bickersteth was then secretary to the Church Missionary Society.

valued the meek and gentle, the humble and holy minister of whom it speaks.*

"My first visit to England will never be forgotten by me, for it was in company with our dear departed friend. I saw more of his deep humility and piety on that occa-

* With respect to the sermon alluded to above, it may be noticed as a proof of the guiding providence of God, that this successful pleader for the missionary cause was remarkably directed to the very subjects best calculated to be useful to the congregation he had to address. On his way to London, his writing-desk, in which he had the sermon he had prepared for the occasion, was, by mistake, left at Oxford, and one exactly similar exchanged for it; before he could recover his, he was obliged to preach the missionary sermon. Though he treated the subject in general as he had done in his written sermon, he was led, while preaching, to introduce many things which were not in the other. And a person who was well acquainted with the sentiments of the congregation, observed, that it would seem as if some one had informed the preacher of the objections which had been made by several there; as he spoke so fully on them, and answered all as if he had previously known them. When this was mentioned to Mr. Mathias, he said, *that these particular parts of his sermon had been brought to his mind while in the pulpit.*

The day after he preached, his desk arrived safely in London with his written sermon.

sion, than on almost any other. We had no sooner reached the inn (at Holyhead) and adjourned to a bed-room, than he at once proposed, with a most feeling sense of recent mercy experienced, to offer our thanksgivings to Him who had so graciously conducted us across the Channel.* He instantly knelt down,

* In the month of April, in the year 1820, Mr. Mathias visited London in order to preach for one of the missionary societies in that city. On the night of the 27th he had a very narrow escape from death. As he lay in his berth in the packet, he heard an unusual noise on deck, and running hastily up, saw a large East Indiaman under full sail, bearing down directly upon their small vessel. He described the scene as *grandly terrific*. The mighty ship, carrying all sail, running down on their little craft. It was a moment of intense anxiety—the fate of all within that little bark hanging, as it were, on a single thread. Mr. Mathias was enabled to lift up his heart in silent prayer to that almighty being in whose hands are the issues of life and death. He soon had the happiness of finding, that, by the exertions of the crew, the packet was got out of danger from the other vessel, though she ran so close under the stern of the packet, that had she struck her, all on board must have been lost. When the danger was over, and he could view the whole scene that had passed with calmness, Mr. Mathias declared that the thrill of gratitude which he felt, for the protecting care granted to him and all on board by his Heavenly Father, produced in him a sensation that could not be described, nor even imagined.

and poured forth one of the most affecting addresses to the throne of grace in which I ever joined. We were detained some days at Holyhead, in consequence of the run upon the road to parliament: and during our stay there, the same holy, pious frame of mind marked all his ways. The sermon he had to preach was not penned when he left Dublin, and much of his time there was spent in the (to him) novel task of writing it, according to the wish of the directors. I shall never cease to remember, and, I trust, with profit, his humble sense of his own powers—his nervous dread of suffering any uncertain sound to escape from the trumpet it was his office to blow, and his prayerful anxiety to preach, not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. As we were detained a Sunday at Holyhead, he was requested to give assistance to the clergyman: the proposal was very cheerfully met, and he preached one of the most effective discourses I ever heard from him, on Balaam's desire to

die the death of the righteous, to one of the largest congregations ever assembled in that church. When it was known that he was to preach, the Methodist and Dissenting chapels were closed, and all flocked together to worship for once under the same roof, and to partake of the spiritual food provided for them in the Establishment. On the following day we proceeded by the mail to London; but a gentleman, who parted us at Oxford, carried off Mr. Mathias's writing-desk in mistake for his own, and thus left him without the sermon it cost him so much exertion to write. It was not recovered in time to admit of its being read, as intended. This was no disadvantage, as you may judge. The discourse he delivered in its room produced the most thrilling effect on the largest and most intelligent congregation I ever saw assembled. His ardour, energy, natural eloquence, and pathos, were never more conspicuously exerted; yet those

who were accustomed to his preaching, like myself, perceived that he was in a strange place, and not in his own beloved Bethesda. To take him by surprise, as a preacher, was impossible. I remember once he was disappointed by a friend, who had undertaken to preach at Bethesda on a Sunday evening for him. He expected the arrival of this gentleman in vain; and finding he did not make his appearance, he retired himself to the vestry, to reflect on some suitable topic for discourse. An experienced minister who was present, and who possessed large endowments as a public speaker, told me afterwards, that he considered the sermon which was thus hastily prepared, the most splendid and affecting effort of pulpit eloquence to which he had ever listened. It was no part of his plan, you know, to offer unto God that which cost him nothing. I had opportunities of observing the deep devotional spirit with which he was wont to enter on preparation for the pulpit. I

well remember his habit of locking himself into his room, for the purpose of prayer, before he even selected the subject of his discourse. I have been often admitted into his library at Belmont when the door was unbolted, and it was not possible to view him, at such seasons, without perceiving he had been on the Mount. It was then his habit to consult the original Scriptures, the commentators and critics, on the passage selected, and this done, he gave himself up to meditation and reflection. The ease with which he carried on a long train of thought in his mind, was an evidence of high mental endowment, qualifying him, in a rare degree, for his office, as an extempore speaker. There was a gentleman in College whom I knew, whose intellects and attainments were of the first order, and who used occasionally to visit Bethesda to hear Mr. Mathias, as an intellectual treat. His words to me once were—'He has all the natural properties of a great orator, and unites

two requisites of real oratory I never knew combined in any other individual—great order and arrangement, together with great power of moving the affections. Those who possess the latter property, in general, consider all regard to order a restraint, which they cast aside; and those who limit themselves to a set and defined course of well-arranged thought, seldom betray much warmth, or move the affections of a congregation in the least.' This judgment completely agrees with my own experience. But were I to give way, I should run on for ever, without any sense of weariness to myself, in referring to the indelible impressions made on my mind by my beloved friend, pastor, and father in the Gospel.

"J. D. Sirr."

While he was in London he* preached in

* He visited London twice for the purpose of preaching in behalf of missionary societies.

different churches. His preaching was much liked. The late Mr. Wilberforce said to a friend—"is it possible this is Mr. Mathias's general manner of preaching? can it be that all his sermons are of such superior style?" His friend replied—that when in Dublin she was in the constant habit of attending on his ministry, and she considered that his sermons were not at all inferior to what had been heard that day. It was intimated to him, that if he chose to apply for a church or chapel in London, he might have a very desirable one; his reply was—"I saw the providence of God clearly in placing me in Bethesda; I must as clearly see his providence in putting me out of it, or else I shall remain there while I live."

The following extracts from letters are inserted here, as showing that a gracious Providence had *indeed* placed him in Bethesda; and likewise, because they testify to the beneficial results which flowed from his mi-

nistrations while occupying that important post :—

"The most peculiar feature of the time when our dear friend accepted the chaplaincy of Bethesda, was the distraction caused in the religious world (that is, our little religious world here) by the introduction of Mr. Walker's peculiar tenets, which had the effect of dispersing the congregation that were then in the habit of attending Bethesda. The rally that took place then, and the revival that followed, are circumstances which existed to a considerable extent, notwithstanding the opposition of Mr. Walker's great talents and influence with the existing professors of that day. The congregation so increased that it was impossible to find accommodation for half as many as would have been willing to attend; and at the period when an effort was made to enlarge the accommodation in the chapel, I remember

being one of a deputation that waited upon a well-known nobleman, a resident landlord, who, with his family, had been for some time attending Bethesda, and who, on this occasion, being solicited, promptly and liberally gave a check on his banker for fifty pounds, said —'I give this contribution most cheerfully, and shall give more should it be necessary, for I consider that Mr. Mathias is doing more for Ireland than any other man in the kingdom.' The deputation appearing to be much struck by the observation, which they attributed to the warm and generous feelings of the individual, and which they conceived might be couched in courtly language, with which his high station made him familiar, paused—when he continued—'I speak advisedly, I know the fact, I know it from my peculiar position in a way which may not come to your knowledge. I have known several instances of gentlemen, men of property and of influence, and some from the

neighbourhood in which I reside, who, coming to Dublin and visiting Bethesda, were so impressed by Mr. Mathias's preaching, that they returned to their homes under the influence of the instructions received, and immediately commenced the establishment of schools and other benevolent institutions, and to adopt measures for the amelioration and improvement of their tenantry, &c. so that there was no calculation could be formed of the extent of the good done by these means.' He seemed to think that a kind of moral impetus was given to society, of which he could form no idea, and from which he looked for the most desirable results."

Extract of a letter from a clergyman in the country, to the Rev. W. B. Stewart Mathias:

"Rev. dear Sir,

". . . . From 1800 to 1805, I was often in Dublin, and met there what religious

society was then in the church, I do not think it consisted of a dozen families, and all the individuals could have been collected in a small drawing-room; most of those went off with Mr. Walker, the father of what religion was then in the church. Things were at a stand for a while, until it pleased God to raise up your dear father and Dr. Thorpe. Bethesda now became greatly crowded, a spirit of inquiry was induced in the congregation, and many families were from time to time called to belong to the household of faith. The seals of your father's ministry were increased every day; still the number was very small, for many years, as could be seen by the slow progress of the Bible Society; for, in 1812, the sixth year from its formation, the whole number of persons met at the annual meeting, fitted round a long table in a room in Grafton-street. Still, the seed scattered by your father's preaching was sown in many hearts, growing slowly,

but surely; and from year to year, as I passed through Dublin, I heard of, or met with one family and another called of God, and separated from the world. From Bethesda alone was this work going on; for such was the state of the church, that when Messrs. D. Wilson, (the present Bishop of Calcutta), Pratt, and Jowett, came over in 1815, to establish a missionary society, and were for three weeks in Dublin, there was not *a single Dublin* clergyman joined them or co-operated with them; your father was confined at Blackrock, and Doctor Thorpe in bed, with illness. After much exertions a meeting was got up, a very poor one, and a society formed.* But after that, the seed

* We must take the liberty of correcting here what appears to have been a *memory mistake* on the part of the reverend writer of the above letter. On referring to the first Report of the "HIBERNIAN *Church Missionary Society*," we find that this society was established in the year 1814; and that there was "a numerous and respectable meeting of persons, friendly to the objects of 'the Church Missionary So-

sown in Bethesda began to spring forth and bear fruit, and what a goodly harvest is there now, to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath visited us with mercy. I have seen the rise and progress of religion among us, and can say, that were it not for the influence and exertions of your father, it would have required many more years to bring forward the goodly multitudes that are now rallied round the societies and the standard of the cross. And I often adored the wisdom of God in

ciety for Africa and the East,' held at the Rotundo, in Dublin, on Wednesday, 22nd June, 1814."

We further learn that the then Lord Mayor was voted into the chair; that the meeting was addressed by the Rev. Messrs. Josiah Pratt, Daniel Wilson, B. W. Mathias, William Atthill, George Hamilton, Robert Daly, James Dunn, William Jowett, the Very Rev. the Dean of Leighlin, &c. besides very many laymen. If the Rev. Dr. Thorpe, who always took an active part in the management and welfare of any religious societies with which he was connected, were not present at the opening meeting of this society, it must have been owing, it is most probable, to his having been confined by illness, as the reverend writer observes. In the year 1815 he was present at the annual meeting, and took part in its proceedings.

raising up a man so peculiarly gifted for his work and place, and so attractive in his address."

As Mr. Mathias's principal occupations were reading and preaching, he seldom wrote his sermons, but spent much time in prayer and study before he attempted to address his congregation; yet when called on *unexpectedly* to preach, if he had not time for previous preparation, he was always found ready; this has happened occasionally, and persons have remarked that his sermons then have been peculiarly excellent; it should seem as if the Lord at such times more fully supported his servant, who never permitted any inconvenience to prevent him from glorifying his name when an opportunity offered; he cast himself most unreservedly on the Lord for help, and was never disappointed. Some instances of the manner in which he was assisted in his sermons, which were quite *extempore*, have been recollected; one shall be mentioned as

being remarkable on account of the great benefit derived from it.

He had gone into Bethesda with a sermon fully arranged for the text he had previously selected; as it was always his custom to spend some time alone in the vestry just before entering the pulpit, for the purpose of re-considering his sermon, and praying for a blessing upon it, he found, while there, that both the text and the sermon were entirely taken away from his recollection; and words which were in the lesson for the day—Good Friday—were forced upon his mind; and the subject was opened with such clearness that a new sermon was given to him. The words were, "Behold the man!" He preached with much power, and was evidently taught of God; several young clergymen were present, some of whom said, they were thankful they had ever heard such a sermon, and dated their reception of the Gospel from that day. But one in particular, who had

been opposed to the doctrines of free grace, as taught in the Scriptures, and proved by the atonement made on the cross, and therefore did not entertain a very friendly feeling towards him who preached those doctrines —declared he had never understood the real character of Christ—that he had never felt the value of the sacrifice offered on the cross—that when he returned to his parish, he trusted he should be enabled to preach to his parishioners as he never yet had done; and that he was now furnished with matter for many sermons. This clergyman became afterwards a most steady and zealous preacher of the Gospel; and a kind and affectionate friend to him, from whom he had, by the divine blessing, derived so much benefit.

But although this diligent servant of God was enabled, under circumstances which could not be avoided, to preach acceptably, and with profit to his hearers, *completely extempore*, he always deprecated this practice in

some preachers, who affected to despise all preparation, and trusted only to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, without using the means which God had given them for their improvement; he considered that of such it might be truly said, "*Ye are idle.*"

The method he pursued in preparing his sermons was, probably, peculiar to himself; having selected a text which he felt he could preach from with benefit to his audience, he meditated deeply on the subject, walking in his garden for the purpose of considering it, and having his mind abstracted from all that was unfavourable to serious thought and prayer. He has been often heard to say, that while wandering among the trees and flowers, new and expanded views of the divine goodness have been presented to his mind. He loved the works of God, and was fond of every branch of natural history; he saw God in his works, and adored the great Creator in them: all were sanctified to his mind. One

Easter morning, his attention was attracted by a butterfly bursting forth from its chrysalis-prison; and, rejoicing in all the freshness of its new-born state, spread its beautiful wings, and upwards sped its flight, to luxuriate in all the delights that awaited it in its new career. This sight, so unexpected, filled his mind with glowing ideas of the resurrection; and his sermon that day was brilliant, interesting, and powerful.

It was his usual practice every evening previous to the day on which he had to preach, to retire to his study, and, having read what he deemed sufficient for the clear understanding of his text, to devote the remainder of his time to meditation and prayer; spending some hours alone, and entirely in the dark; yet, during that period, *he never felt the slightest inclination to sleep;* his mind was wholly absorbed in his subject. On the following morning he again repaired early to his library; remaining there, once more

engaged in prayer and meditation, until the time arrived for his going to church.

His visits to the sick and dying were, in general, greatly blest to their souls; he spoke to their feelings and to their consciences—his manner was so gentle, and so conciliating, that they heard without anger the plainest truths, and such as were most unpleasant to human nature.

"Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. . . . . .
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faultering accents whispered praise."

One very remarkable instance of this shall be stated, as an encouragement to clergymen not to give up any case as hopeless, knowing that the grace of God can reach the hardest heart. One day Mr. Mathias was met by a clergyman, who immediately said to him,

"I am glad to see you; you are just the very person I was wishing for." He then told him he was anxious about one of his parishioners, a young man who was dying, and who was fully sensible he could not recover; for, from his knowledge as a medical student, he was aware of his danger; yet he would neither listen to the reading of the Scriptures, nor to any religious conversation; saying, that "*he had made up his religion, and would not now alter his opinions.*" This clergyman also told him, that the poor dying man had declared it was his belief, that the soul did not perish with the body. Both clergymen went together to visit the sick man. Mr. Mathias was introduced into a room, where he saw a young man of most interesting appearance lying in bed; he was much emaciated, and had a very intelligent, though a very unhappy expression of countenance; when he was told who had come to see him, he turned to his minister and

said, "this was quite useless, sir, you know I want none of the clergy to visit me, I have formed my own plan of religion, and shall not now change it."

Mr. Mathias was neither offended nor discouraged by this rebuke: he drew near to the bed, and taking the sick man's hand in his, with a low and gentle voice said to him—"You seem to be very ill, my dear sir; I hope you do not suffer much pain?" The invalid replied—"I do suffer great pain; but it will soon be over; I know it will." "That is, your pain of body will soon be over; but do you believe your soul will cease to exist when your body dies?" "No; I do not—it could not be. That glorious emanation of Deity could not cease to exist, merely because it is separated from a body that is turning to dust. I have witnessed too many instances of the mind—the vital part retaining its powers, and sometimes even seeming to gain new strength when just about to leave the

body—ever to believe it could sink into a state of annihilation." "Then, in what state do you suppose the soul will be, after it is separated from the body? I speak to you, my young friend, particularly now: you know that your time is very short—moments are precious—let me then entreat you to consider how your soul can appear before a holy God! Can you say you have never broken the law which he implanted in your mind, when he gave you a monitor within—a conscience to accuse you?" The poor young man gave a shudder. "Oh!" he replied, "I dare not say so; I have often acted contrary to the dictates of conscience; I have often neglected duties and committed offences." "Then, how can you stand acquitted before a just and holy God?" "Will he not be merciful?" inquired the poor dying man. "Yes; he is merciful, and he is just; and he formed a plan by which mercy and justice can meet: your plan of religion would

not, I fear, stand the test of his word." "I know not," replied the unhappy young man; "I am ignorant; oh! almost entirely ignorant of the contents of the Bible."

Mr. Mathias then spoke of the creation of man—a holy character, as he came from the hands of his Creator—but now defiled by sin, which is disobedience to God. He then spoke of the justice of God, which is the necessary attribute of a perfect Being: and added—"How could a just God avoid punishing an act of disobedience? He must cease to be just before he could do so." The young man listened with deep interest; and when the speaker paused, almost groaned, but remained silent. "Now, my dear young friend," said this truly Christian minister, "what must have become of us all, if God were not merciful as well as just? I will read you two verses from that precious book which you have so long neglected." He then read these words—"'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in

him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.'* You find from these words," he continued, "that God *is* merciful—mercy and justice are united. He loved the world—those who had rebelled against his authority, and opposed the dictates of their consciences: but justice forbade that he should pardon any without a satisfaction being made. Mercy found out and procured that satisfaction." He then read from the same chapter†—"'He that believeth on Him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

"My dear young friend, do allow me to

* John iii. 16, 17. † Verses 18, 19.

be plain with you; I dare not trifle: do you not know that you hated light, because *your* deeds were evil?" "O, I do," he replied, "O pray, dear sir; pray to God for me, that he would, for the sake of the sacrifice of his beloved Son, have mercy on *me*—I am a lost, a perishing sinner!" "'Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save those who are lost.' This we read in his own Word," replied the humble herald of Jesus.

He then prayed with the poor young man, who seemed earnestly to join in the petitions offered up.—Two days after he was in eternity!*

* His own minister was the last who visited him; and he informed Mr. Mathias that this young student continued in a prayerful happy state while life remained.

CHAPTER VII.

Different religious societies established in Dublin—Mr. Mathias receives pupils—His instructions blest to some of them—A letter from one—Extract from the "pastoral annals"—Opposition made to his doctrines—Inhibition—Kindness of a clergyman—Taken ill in Bethesda—Visits Cheltenham—Much benefitted by it—Illness and death of his daughter—Unkindness shown to him—Anonymous letter—Attacked by paralysis—Conversation with his family—Goes to the country—Recommences preaching—Second attack of paralysis—Finally gives up preaching—Seized with a new illness—Goes to reside in the country—Materially benefitted by the change—His love and gratitude conspicuous—Attacked by influenza—Threatened with paralysis—Unable to attend church—Extract from a letter of Rev. Dr. Payson—His last illness—Death.

In the preceding chapter it has been observed, that when Mr. Mathias came to Dublin, there was no society established for the spiritual welfare of Ireland, in connexion with the Church of England, except "The Society for discountenancing Vice," &c. This one society was not at all sufficient for the

great work to be accomplished for the benefit of those who had hitherto been most unhappily neglected. But, owing to the labours of Mr. Mathias and his colleague, the Rev. W. Thorpe, such religious impressions were produced, that, subsequently to the formation of the Bible Society, others were also formed, which still continue, and in most cases with increasing interest and usefulness. As he took an active interest in the welfare of these societies, so he felt it necessary to support them by his subscriptions. His means were very limited, his family was increasing, and there were continual demands on his hospitality. He was therefore induced to receive a limited number of pupils into his house,* whom he carefully instructed in the principles of religion, while he also prepared them for entering the university. This was an unfortunate determination for him, as far as his

* A.D. 1809.

temporal circumstances were concerned, as he lost much by his increased expenses and too great liberality. But he had reason to bless God that some who were entrusted to his care, were thankful for the truths they learned from him, and the instructions they received while under his roof. Some have died rejoicing in the Lord, and declaring that to him, under God, they were indebted for the happiness which they enjoyed. One, who went to a distant country for the benefit of his health, sent, shortly before his death, to acknowledge the gratitude he owed to his kind preceptor, and left him a sum of money for the benefit of any charitable institution he might please to give it to.

Another, who seemed to have received some religious impressions while under his care, was afterwards so drawn away by evil companions, that he indulged in open vice, particularly in profane swearing. This he carried to such a height, that it was found necessary

to request he would either give up this dreadful practice, or discontinue his visits at the house. He chose the latter; and Mr. Mathias heard no more of him for some years. But the impressions he had received, while under the care of this excellent man, seemed to have returned with double force when circumstances cast him among strangers. His conscience had been only asleep, not dead; it was roused to oppose the enemies of divine truth. He made a stand for the Gospel among many who derided it; and formed a little society for the purpose of reading the Scriptures and for prayer, amidst a number of young people, who scoffed at those who preferred the approbation of God and their consciences, to the commendations of others who knew not the truth as in Jesus.

More instances might be mentioned of young persons who had reason to bless God for having been providentially placed under Mr. Mathias's care. It will be sufficient, however,

to copy part of a letter received by the family of this revered servant of God, since he was called to enter into his rest. The writer had the privilege of seeing him, and receiving a blessing from him a very short time before his death:—

"My revered friend and father in the ministry has escaped from the darkness and thraldom of the body, to the glory and the dignity, the light and the liberty, of eternal life. May I have grace to be a follower of him, who now, through faith and patience, inherits the promises. How I long to be with him and others, whose memories are consecrated amidst much grateful recollections—to rejoice with them in the exercise of a friendship as immortal as the freshnesses of a Saviour's bosom! I had the rich privilege of being educated by our now glorified friend, and of sitting under his ministry for some years. I humbly pray that such blessed

opportunities may not rise up in judgment against me at the great day. I deeply regret that I gave too small a share of attention to his valuable instructions; yet, when I look back on the time I spent under his roof, and the hours I sat under his ministry, I am reminded of the words of the poet:—

> " 'Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
> And fondly broods with miser's care;
> Time, but the impression deeper makes,
> As streams their channels deeper wear.'

"I often think of his childlike playfulness in the family circle; in the pulpit, how earnestly he laboured to have Jesus Christ the invisible preacher; to place himself behind his blessed Master. His one object was to exalt the Saviour, to abase and to attract the sinner. With what power and perspicuity he preached the atonement; with what grace and precision he turned the Gospel kaleidoscope, and placed it to every eye: his sanctified genius threw an interest and an

attractiveness over the one glorious story. He never wandered for meteors to the regions of novelty. He sought, and found his stars among the majestic simplicity of the constellations of the cross."

Though Mr. Mathias's preaching was blest to many souls, it would appear that he was raised up particularly for the purpose of preparing a body of heralds, to go forth and proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ." It has been frequently remarked, that in almost every part of the world where missionaries have gone, some *one* at least dated his first religious impressions from the preaching at Bethesda; and it may truly be said, that the numbers who went from Trinity College as ministers of the Established Church, were nearly all brought to rejoice in the doctrines of that church, and to preach them with effect, in consequence of the benefit they derived from his preaching. One clergyman

has borne his public testimony to this fact. An extract is given from a work lately published by him.*

"I frequented the most approved places of public worship in the metropolis; in particular, Bethesda chapel, where Mr. Mathias, then in full vigour of his faculties, expounded the way of life with the freedom and truth of an apostle of the everlasting Gospel. In common with many of my contemporaries, I may refer my first serious impressions upon the great question of redemption, through the sacrifice of Jesus, to the preaching of that gifted man: on the hours then spent under his ministry, I look back through the long vista of years, with a pleasure and gratitude I should in vain attempt to describe. Those of my class who were then disciples of that valued master, speak of him in the same affectionate strain as I feel myself constrained to do."

* Pastoral Annals.

It was contrary to the positive directions of the then provost of Trinity College, that any of the students should attend Bethesda; but those who felt the value of the instructions they received there, would not suffer this to prevent them from listening to one whom they knew taught the same religion for which the apostles and the fathers of the church had suffered; therefore, many came to Bethesda immediately after the service in the College Chapel was concluded.

This devoted servant of his Master was called to bear many trials, and go forth in the front of the battle against the world, sin, and Satan. The Gospel, which he delighted to preach, was not then so highly valued as it is at this day, and was therefore viewed by some as a novelty; in consequence of this he was *inhibited* from preaching in any of the churches in Dublin;* and so much afraid

* He was, however, licensed by Archbishop Magee in the the year 1828.

were all the clergy of giving him any assistance, *even* by reading prayers for him, that on two occasions, after he had been travelling through the country as a deputation for one of the religious societies, and having suffered much fatigue, he was completely overcome while performing the service, and nearly fainted.* At this time he was without a stated assistant; as the young clergymen feared that officiating in Bethesda would prevent them from getting any preferment in the church. One clergyman only, and one from whom he had no reason previously to expect such kindness, in defiance of the opinions of those whom the rest dreaded, came every Sunday to read prayers and assist in any way he could; he lived at a distance, yet seemed not to feel this as an inconvenience, and it never was a hindrance to his persevering kindness.

* This occurred once in the year 1822.

It has been just mentioned, that, in consequence of great fatigue and exhaustion, Mr. Mathias had twice nearly fainted in Bethesda. One Saturday evening he had returned late, after having been engaged through the week in travelling for some of the religious societies, on which occasion he found it necessary to speak frequently and at length, and likewise to preach. On the next day, it was his duty both to read the service and address a crowded congregation in Bethesda: while reading prayers, he was quite overcome, and nearly fainted. At that time, the interest felt for him was very great; and all his hearers were anxious about his health. And having been advised by a medical friend to try what a visit to Cheltenham* might do to restore his strength, his congregation kindly sent a sum of money to defray all expenses—a friend accompanying him, saved

* In the year 1822.

him all trouble. He received much benefit from this visit, but met with a severe shock when he returned.

He found that two of his children, to whom he was warmly attached, had been for the last month alarmingly ill of a fever, which was then very prevalent; and the day after his return, he witnessed the happy death of his eldest, who had, though very young, given proof, for several years, that she was indeed a child of God. Their illness had been concealed from him by the advice of friends. His ignorance of their dangerous state enabled him to obtain greater benefit at Cheltenham; but the shock he received on his arrival at home, was more severe. However, all who knew him observed the increased spirituality of his mind, in consequence of his late affliction; he seemed almost to live in heaven!

His preaching continued to be much blest: the chapel was not only filled, but overflow-

ing every Sabbath: many were obliged to leave the place for want of room, either to sit or stand: people were glad to seat themselves on the gallery stairs and on the window-seats; and the most perfect stillness prevailed among the congregation, while this Christian teacher exalted the Saviour, as the only hope of a sinner's redemption, and enforced the necessity of a holy life, as a proof that they loved him who gave himself for them. According to his own words—"*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*"*

Every week brought some new proof of the blessing that attended his ministry. But the more the Lord honoured this dear servant, the more his humility increased. One evening, as he was walking in from his house in Drumcondra to preach at Bethesda, a friend, to whom he freely spoke his feelings, mentioned a case in which this faithful preacher's instruc-

* John xiv. 15.

tions had been blest to one who had before been careless and worldly-minded: he was silent for a few minutes; then, turning to his friend, said—"You have no idea how this humbles me: I feel as if I could sink into the earth with shame, when I think of the honour the Lord has conferred on one so unworthy."

Mr. Mathias's extreme humility, and unwillingness to hurt the feelings of any creature, made him often submit to unkindness, rather than resist it. Harsh, indeed, and devoid of every Christian principle must they have been, who could or would act unkindly towards this dear, humble servant of God; one who would not injure even an enemy, but most gladly do him any kindness in his power. However, such *harsh spirits do exist;* and he has suffered from them; and his sensitive mind felt it strongly at different periods of his life. One morning, in the month of April, 1832, an anonymous letter, dictated, it would seem, by

a *most unfeeling heart*, was brought to him: he certainly felt this much; yet it cannot be positively pronounced that it was the cause of an illness, which laid him aside in the midst of his usefulness, as other unpleasant circumstances had been for some time acting on his mind.

However, that evening he complained of not being well; said he had a strange feeling on one side, which he could not account for. After a little, he thought no more of it: but next day, while in his study, became much paralysed on one side. Immediate assistance was procured; but a paralytic attack could not be averted; and he was prohibited from preaching. His recollection and judgment were not, however, at all impaired. He used to spend his sleepless nights in arranging sermons, until warned that it might be injurious, and retard his recovery.

When he first learned that his disease was decidedly paralysis, he called his family about

him for the purpose of speaking to them concerning his state and his hopes, as he feared that he might shortly be deprived of his mental powers. He had long entertained a horror of paralysis, as he had, among his own connexions,* witnessed two cases of it in

* The following account of one of his "connexions" is given here in the form of a note; as, though she had received "the truth as it is in Jesus," while residing in the north of Ireland; yet, the power of divine grace to uphold and comfort the soul never so conspicuously displayed itself in her, as when a sufferer from the painful disease, which eventually removed her from this vale of tears and trials into the immediate presence of that dear Saviour, who had been her joy, consolation, and support in the hour of pain and tribulation.

Mrs. Stewart was another seal added to the ministry of the venerable subject of this memoir. She had heard the word of life from him when he was curate to the Rev. Thomas Tighe; the Lord richly blest it to her salvation. After some years she came to reside at the house of Mr. Mathias; she was there attacked by a severe and trying illness—the dread paralysis. Shortly after she was so visited, she remarked—"I prayed to the Lord frequently to rouse me from a dead and stupid state, and fill my heart with love to him; but had I known he would have chosen to answer my prayer in this manner," alluding to her illness, "I fear I should not have offered it up sincerely. But I can now say from my heart—Lord, thy will be done."

The evil of sin, and particularly the sinfulness of her own heart, were deeply impressed on her mind. She delighted

its worst state; yet was his mind kept in "perfect peace." He seemed only eager to calm the distress of those he loved. He said to them—"Be not uneasy or anxious; I am in the Lord's hands; he will do with me as he sees best. But, before I am deprived of the power of speaking, I wish to leave some

in hearing the word of God read, and in having his dear servants to pray with her. She used frequently to pray for blessings on her family and friends, and more particularly on him, to whom, under God, she owed her present happiness; saying, "Dear Mathias, my friend and *spiritual father!* may God bless you and your congregation. I prayed earnestly to the Lord, but my prayer was, that I might be restored to health, and be useful to my fellow-creatures. God set aside all my plans—he knew better—his will be done."

One day, when the storm was high, and the wind driving the rain against the windows, she observed—"That storm is like the world; but here I have peace, for here is Jesus." At another time she remarked, that for some days and nights she had never slept; "but," she added, "I lie quiet in the day that I may be undisturbed with my Saviour; I lie awake at night when all around me is still. Day and night Jesus is ever present with me."

About a year and half from the time of her first attack, her happy spirit winged its flight to that blessed abode, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

directions. I entreat you will avoid all unnecessary expenses on my account: let my funeral be as plain and simple as possible; let nothing induce you to lay out one pound more than is just sufficient. For my children, I have nothing to say, only"—raising his eyes, and the only hand he could command, towards heaven, he added—"*May the gracious Lord pour down on them his choicest blessings, by bringing them all to himself; may they be all made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and enjoy an eternity of bliss with their God and Saviour.*" Then, turning towards his family, he continued—"I have nothing to leave you, my dear loves, but my blessing—and I *know* the Lord *will* bless you." After a short pause, he said—"If this illness be removed, the long confinement may injure my general health. I dread to be a burden to my family: yet, if the Lord see it right to spare me, and make me useful in the church of Christ, I shall

rejoice; but his will be done; I unreservedly cast all my care on him."

One day soon after his first attack, while surrounded by his family, he requested one of them to read to him; and chose for this purpose part of the Prophet Isaiah, beginning with the fifty-second chapter. He remarked, that from the thirteenth verse of that chapter to the end of the fifty-fifth, was the continuation of an address to the church. It began with a declaration of the atonement of Christ, and followed on the same subject to the end of the fifty-third chapter; the fifty-fourth was exhortation and comfort to the church; and the fifty-fifth contained an invitation to the whole world to come and receive the salvation so freely offered. On the thirteenth verse of the fifty-fourth chapter he made some very comforting remarks. The promise that all the children of God should be taught of him, led him to urge on all his family

to plead the promises; knowing, that what God has promised, *he will most assuredly perform.* "What a privilege," he said, "to be taught of the great God of the whole universe; of him who condescends to instruct his poor, weak, and worthless creatures. Shall we dare to slight such gracious promises? Shall we not value such precious declarations?"

Sir Philip Crampton and Doctor Murphy having attended him, after a few days pronounced it their opinion, that, although his illness was paralysis, they had great hopes of a complete recovery. He went to Kingstown, and was so much benefitted by change of air and scene, together with perfect quietness and domestic society, that in the August following, he ventured to read the lessons for the day in Carysfort Chapel, Blackrock; and after a little, to lecture for a short time in the same place. In November, he recommenced lectures, on week-days, in the Bethesda, and resumed preaching as usual

on the first of January, 1833.* He seemed to have all his powers restored, with the exception of the use of his right hand; he appeared to possess new energy, and his preaching was more animated, more earnest than ever. He continued the same humble, holy, devoted minister of Christ; exalting the Saviour, and calling on sinners to repent and believe the Gospel, until the latter end of May, 1835, when he was suddenly seized with another and more severe attack of his old disease, was nearly deprived of speech; and his kind medical friends declared he could never again venture to enter a pulpit. This was indeed a great trial to him, who had, with so much success and acceptance, advocated the cause of his Lord and Saviour for thirty-eight years. He frequently lamented that he was then perfectly useless, and said—

* *Vide* his sermon for New-Year's Day in his published volume of sermons.

"If it were the Lord's will, I would rather bear all the reproach which could be cast on me for the cause of Christ, than remain so useless and inactive." But he submitted to the will of his Heavenly Father, and would not repine.

As he was disabled from the possibility of ever again undertaking his clerical duties, and his constitution having been worn out in the service of his Master, for the benefit, not only of the numbers that attended Bethesda Chapel, but also, it might be said, for the cause of religion in Ireland; some friends, who had been his constant hearers, exerted themselves to procure an annuity for his life. He still, however, continued to enjoy a tolerable state of health, and felt happy in the society of those he loved; when one night his family were alarmed by a new appearance of his illness,*

* A. D. 1836.

he complained of feeling very chilly, and breathed with excessive difficulty; his physician pronounced this attack to be entirely nervous, and it was observed that he always suffered from it when any thing had occurred to cause him uneasiness of mind.*

* On the night of January the 6th, 1839, there was a most tremendous hurricane, which raged with unparalleled violence; and was productive of very fatal effects in Dublin. Bethesda Chapel, where so many souls had been brought to know that Saviour, whom "even the winds and the waves obey," was, during that awful night, rendered a ruined pile, a venerable wreck, hallowed by long and endeared associations. Having accidentally taken fire, the raging flames became uncontrollable, in consequence of the fury of the storm, and baffled every attempt to subdue them. When Mr. Mathias heard of the fearful conflagration he was greatly agitated, he could not speak of it, but felt deeply thankful to the Almighty, who had graciously spared the lives of all the persons who inhabited different parts of the building. Some time after this a friend having called to see him, not being aware of the great excitement even the simple mention of the subject produced, was giving a particular description of the scene he had witnessed during the fire; Mr. Mathias was so painfully agitated by the recital, that he must have left the room, had not the conversation been changed by his family on observing his state.

For a length of time he could not speak of it without an expression of sorrow: the many happy hours he had spent in Bethesda, were forcibly brought to his recollection.

Happening to be in Dublin one day, he was inadvertently

About two years after this new symptom showed itself, he went to reside constantly in the country, and found his health materially benefitted by the change of air and scene. A kind friend made him a present of an easy little carriage, which was a great source of enjoyment to him; and every day the weather permitted, he was drawn through some of the pleasant avenues in the neighbourhood of the Blackrock. He still continued to take pleasure in the society of his family, and was greatly gratified by their reading to him in the evenings.

In December, 1840, the family removed to a house in Merrion-avenue, which was selected in compliance with his wishes. Shortly after removing there he was attacked by influenza

driven past the ruins; on seeing them, the most melancholy regret covered his countenance—he turned away, and never saw them again!

Alas! It was but a noble and sacred wreck, gazing on a consecrated ruin.

which was then prevalent; this illness tended to undermine his already enfeebled frame; but though his infirmities increased, his mind continued calm in the peace of God. He found that that blessed Being whose name is "Love," will "never leave nor forsake" his servants; and when they become feebler by the breaking down of their earthly tabernacle, he will more graciously and abundantly than ever be present with them, comfort them with the outpouring of his Spirit, and the bright foretaste of those unfading joys which are treasured up for all who love and serve him faithfully on earth.

It has been well remarked by the poet, that "true piety is cheerful as the day:" indeed, genuine cheerfulness is the natural offspring of true religion. The blessed nature of the Gospel, shedding its holy influence on the soul, planting the peace of God in the heart, can *alone* impart that rational spirit of liveliness, which is only to be found in the

sincere follower of the Lord. The subject of our memoir eminently possessed this truly pleasing disposition; coupled, at the same time, with the most solemn sense of the presence of his God. In his family circle he was cheerful and even playful.

Among the many holy feelings that fill the pious Christian's heart, and which were possessed in a high degree by this sainted warrior of the Lord, love and gratitude most conspicuously displayed themselves. A member of his family particularly, who was in constant attendance on him from October, 1840, at which period he possessed the faculty of expressing his feelings with sufficient clearness, observed, that in the silent hours of the night, as well as through the day, the predominant sentiments of his heart were gratitude and love to his Heavenly Father for his various blessings and enjoyments. He used frequently to say—"I have many, many mercies;" and, raising his eyes to heaven, would remain for

some time in silent prayer and thanksgiving for God's goodness to him. It was his constant custom, before going out in his little carriage, to spend some time in prayer, and on his return from his jaunt, he invariably offered up his thanksgivings at the throne of grace for his various enjoyments and mercies. His mind was wholly stayed on God; and he enjoyed "perfect peace," resting in implicit confidence on the "Prince of Peace." He has more than once, when alluding to his departure, said to his attendant—"I am not afraid to die, for I know that my peace is made with God."*

It has been already stated, that gratitude formed a conspicuous trait in the character

* Surely there was no presumption in this expression; for "*the righteous hath hope in his death.*" He who hath lived "the life of the righteous," may we not confidently hope, shall "die the death of the righteous?" Of what avail is "the full assurance of hope" to the believer, if he cannot with all confidence, say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 Tim. i. 12.

of this heavenly-minded man; he felt it pre-eminently towards his God, and, in a subordinate degree, towards all who showed him kindness. Frequently, while suffering from one of his nervous attacks, during which the difficulty of breathing impeded his speech, before he was able to express himself distinctly, he would thus give utterance to his feelings—"I have many mercies—God is very good to me—I have great cause for gratitude;" he would then become silent, and raise his eyes to heaven, evidently engaged in mental communion with the God of all mercies. He showed his grateful feelings to those who administered to his comfort, always expressing thankfulness for every attention paid to him. To one of his sons, who was latterly much with him, watching over him through the day, and always sitting up with him at night, if he were either unwell or lying sleepless, he used frequently to say—"Thank you, dear, you are very kind to

me. God bless you over and over again." His weakness having so much increased that it was necessary to move him from one room to another in a chair with rollers, he greatly enjoyed a contrivance made by his younger son for his accommodation, and expressed much gratitude for this attention to his ease and comfort.

If the countenance be the index of the mind, and we are justified in forming our opinion of its state by the expression, we may safely conclude that this faithful servant of the Most High enjoyed perfect happiness in his God, and that all fears of death were taken away from him. It was truly delightful to look upon his countenance: peace was depicted in its every lineament; security of eternal joys sat serenely there; a smile, such as mercy, rejoicing over the penitent, might be supposed to possess, ever rested on his placid features; and when his spirit had fled, that smile still remained, beautiful *even* in death!

At length, however, it was the will of the Lord that the time should approach when this holy man, who had been so eminently chosen of God to be a Gospel-herald, and prepare the way for a host of warriors, was to be removed from a world of trial into the immediate presence of his Saviour, where there is "fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." It was observed that there was a threatened attack of paralysis hanging over him, and the nervous difficulty of breathing was more frequent; this arose principally from a source of anxiety which his family had in vain endeavoured to remove, and which sunk deeply on his spirits. But though much weakened in bodily health, and his speech very indistinct, yet was his heart continually engaged with his God, and he lived in close communion with him. He has been frequently observed, when sitting in his favourite seat, the drawing-room window, raising his eyes towards heaven,

and the only hand he had any power over, fervently engaged in silent prayer, and evidently enjoying sweet intercourse with his God, while the smile of peace mantled over his mild features.

When he was no longer able to attend church, two of his family agreed to remain at home with him alternately every Sabbath. The day fortnight previous to his death, a tract entitled, "Last Days of Rev. Dr Payson," was read to him; he was particularly delighted with a letter in it, which that good man had addressed to his sister. He seemed so fully to enjoy this letter, and to make it his own, that it is thought advisable to insert that part of it from which he derived so much pleasure, in the hope it may prove a solace to others also.

" . . . My dear sister, were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which

I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view; its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached; and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness; and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants: I want a whole

heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.

"But why do I speak thus of myself and my feelings? Why not speak only of our God and Redeemer? It is because I know not what to say. When I would speak of them, my words are all swallowed up. I can only tell you what effects their presence produces; and even of these I can tell you but very little. O, my sister! could you but know what awaits the Christian; could you only know so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy. Labour, trials, troubles, would be nothing: you would rejoice in afflictions, and glory in tribulations; and, like Paul and Silas, sing God's praises in the darkest night and in the deepest dungeon."

While this letter was being read to him, he showed by his countenance that every

word was the expression of his own heart; though his speech was very imperfect, he was able to make known his feelings, and he thanked his God for its precious contents.

At last, however, his bodily powers, wholly weakened and destroyed by the energy and sensitiveness of his mind, entirely gave way. On Thursday the 27th of May, 1841, a very decided change took place: his medical friend ordered different remedies; but it was the will of God that these should *now* prove ineffectual. The difficulty of breathing became very painful, and he was almost totally deprived of the power of speech, though yet still able to afford evident proofs that he perfectly understood all that was said to him.

He felt fully sensible that the closing scene of life was drawing near, and that he must very shortly leave his family, to whom he had ever been tenderly attached. On the Friday previous to his decease, seeing his son, who had sat up the night before with him, rising

from his seat, and perhaps fearing that he was going out of the room, he said—"William, stay with me—stay with me." He said this, doubtless, under the feeling that he was soon going to leave his son for ever in this world, and therefore felt anxious that he should not be absent from him for a moment. A few hours before he entered into his rest he said again to his son, who, having spent the previous night also at his father's bedside, was leaving the room for a few minutes—"William, don't leave me—don't leave me." On his replying—"No, dear father, I shall never leave you," he became perfectly composed, and never spoke again.

His family would have been greatly gratified, could he have addressed them, previous to his removal from among them; and he made various attempts to do so—but it was not the Lord's will that this should be. They could not, however, entertain even a shadow of doubt respecting the state of his mind:

though speaking so very indistinctly, they could perceive he was continually engaged in prayer or praise; and some words were understood, which he repeated at different intervals, such as—" grace"—" blessing"—" blest" &c. It was not necessary that this " dear guide of holiness" should give evidence in his last hours of his hopes of eternal happiness; he did not require to afford any assurance of his future happiness: *his whole life* was such as to satisfy all doubts as to this point; and therefore, perhaps, the Most High withheld from him the power of speaking to his family when his days on earth were closing; for they had long the privilege of witnessing his holy, humble, consistent conduct, and needed not any confirmation of the power of divine grace to save to the uttermost.

They who have been called late in life to a saving knowledge of the Gospel, are frequently permitted in their dying hours to proclaim to their anxious friends their hopes

of salvation and redemption through Christ. This is graciously allowed, in order that all fears may be removed from the sorrowing survivors: but in case of veterans in the service of Jehovah, such proofs not being requisite, it not unfrequently happens that they are deprived of the ability to speak to their relatives and friends in the parting hour.

On Whit-Sunday, May 30th, 1841, the happy spirit of this eminent servant of the Lord winged its blissful flight to the realms of unfading joy; where, amid "the general assembly and church of the first-born," who throng the golden streets of the city of God, he now walks in all the freshness of immortality, clothed with white robes, bearing the palm-branch of victory, and tuning his harp to those enraptured strains, that swell in sweetest harmony through heaven's eternal arches.*

* It had always been the earnest wish of this dear saint, that when it should please the Lord to lay him on his death-bed, he might have all his family about him; his wish was

"Illustrious like a sun—he, shining from afar,
Most excellent in glory stood assured,
Waiting the promised crown, the promised throne,
The welcome and approval of his Lord."

His spirit had only fled its tabernacle—his tongue was but hushed for ever—scarce had darkness sealed his once speaking eyes—mourning hearts wept by the bed whereon his cold corpse lay—when a ray of light burst forth through death's dark gloom; it penetrated where thick clouds had veiled all before: a voice spoke where all was silent; it reached one heart, cold and spiritually dead, and cried—"Come forth and live."

The annexed verses are by that one, whose eternal life sprung from his temporal death:—

I.

"He's gone! and is no relic left,
No witness of his worth?
Is all that now remains of him,
His cold, his mouldering earth?

fully granted; and both his sons closed those eyes in death, which to the last hour he could command them, were fixed on those he loved, gazing upon them with all the fondness of the purest, holiest affection.

II.

"Has Fame no trumpet clear and loud,
To sound his praise abroad?
Can there no tongue be heard to speak,
And laud that man of God?

III.

"Can Death's cold, stern, resistless grasp,
Rend all the past away?
Does Memory never dwell on him,
The glory of his day?

IV.

"It does! it does! in thousand hearts
That saint revered shall be;
'Twas he who taught their blinded souls
The paths of death to flee.

V.

"And last of all, when he was called
To wing his flight to heaven,
One trembling one beside him wept,
And she was much forgiven."

It has been thought that a short notice of Mr. Mathias's last illness, in the words

of his medical attendants, might be interesting to some readers. The following is extracted from their account:—

Doctor Edward Murphy writes—"In April, 1832, I was called to attend Mr. Mathias, and found him labouring under the first shock his constitution had received from continued exertions in his ministerial duties. Being naturally of rather a full habit, preaching constantly, and always with great energy, his chapel being much too small for his congregation, and very deficient in ventilation, all conspired to predispose him to the attack, which some cause of temporary anxiety brought on. Symptoms of serous apoplexy were present, some slight effusion had evidently taken place in the brain. His intellect remained clear, but his articulation was indistinct. The angle of the mouth was slightly drawn to the right side, and the arm and leg of that side gave him the sensation of numbness and tingling; their muscular

power was not diminished, but less under his control. In attempting to walk he could not fairly plant the foot of the affected leg, but described it as if a strap along the back of his leg prevented him. He could grasp any thing strongly, but could not give direction to his fingers. Sir P. Crampton saw him with me, and under the treatment adopted, sensation and voluntary power were gradually restored in the affected limbs—the hand alone continuing the same. Soon after this, Mr. Mathias went to the country, which benefitted him greatly. In a few months he resumed his clerical labours; but in May, 1835, I was again called on to visit him. On a second notice of the recurrence of his complaint, it was deemed advisable that he should discontinue altogether his clerical duties, as there then appeared a permanent but incomplete paralysis of the right side.

"After this time Mr. Mathias continued

free from any renewal of the apoplectic attack, never lost his usual cheerfulness, and seemed to enjoy the society of his friends. For some time he continued in this state of health, when a new feature presented itself—one night after retiring to rest he complained of being very cold, and was attacked soon after with a difficulty of breathing; his family were greatly alarmed, and feared he was dying. Being immediately sent for, I found him suffering from dyspnœa, which seemed altogether nervous. It readily yielded under the use of diffusible stimulants, and only afterwards was brought on by some cause of excitement—by caution, however, the attacks became less frequent, but his feebleness continued to increase."

In December, 1840, Doctor Murphy went to reside in London, and the care of Mr. Mathias then devolved on Doctor Benson, who says, "I found him very weak, but free from pain, except so far as the par-

oxysms of difficult breathing might be considered painful. These were very distressing; they occurred several times during the day and night, and each paroxysm lasted from half an hour to an hour, or even two. They appeared to me to be what might be called *nervous*, and were very much aggravated by any emotion of an unpleasant kind. One source of anxiety seemed especially to distress his mind; and when his family failed in their efforts to remove it, his feeble frame too plainly proved the influence it had on his health. On the twenty-seventh of May, a slight bronchitis came on, with some febrile symptoms; he was obliged to remain in bed; his strength and appetite gradually failed; and after a few days he expired, retaining his intellect to the end. He died, May the thirtieth, 1841."

CHAPTER VIII.

Character by the Rev. Hugh White—Extract from a letter—A Tribute to departed worth—Lines on hearing of the death of the Rev. B. W. Mathias—Brief account of A. M. S. Mathias.

THE character of the venerable soldier of the cross, whose life has been sketched in the previous "Brief Memorials," bears on its impress the special training of the great teacher of the church. When we reflect on his humility, meekness, and gentle spirit, combined with transcendent talent and eloquence, unblamable life, and genuine holiness of heart, we behold *one* raised up by the Most High for the great purpose—glorious in its effects—not only of recommending to the attention of men, but also, of leading them to the serious consideration of

the most important subject, which can engross the mind—the salvation of the immortal soul."*

We cannot do greater justice to the character of the venerable deceased, than by giving here the following beautiful sketch from the valuable pen of the Rev. Hugh White.

"The Rev. B. W. Mathias has rested from all his labours and sufferings, and entered, we feel confident, on the joy of his Lord. And it is sweet and consolatory to those who knew and loved him, to follow his emancipated spirit's flight into the presence

* The following passage from a letter received by one of the family, soon after the decease of the subject of our memoir, contains such a beautiful allusion to a trait in his character, that we cannot refrain from giving it a place here:—

". . . . I never shall forget my revered friend, Mr. Mathias; his memory is embalmed with me, in all that is pure, ardent, and sincere. He was indeed worthy of the high service which he so faithfully, so unflinchingly, yet so inoffensively discharged. *He healed many a bruised spirit, but wounded none!*"

of the Saviour; to behold him with the eye of faith, there rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and to pay the tribute of affectionate esteem to the memory of one, who, for above thirty years preached the Gospel in the metropolis with a faithfulness, an affectionateness, a simplicity, and a success that have seldom indeed been equalled, and never, I believe, excelled.

"The peculiar charm of his preaching consisted in the fervent glow of Christian love which pervaded all his powerful and persuasive appeals, and clothed them with the almost irresistible attractions of that eloquence which gushes warm from the heart, and makes its way directly to the heart. He seemed indeed always to speak out of the fulness of a heart running over with love to God and love to all mankind, springing from a believing view of the stupendous love displayed on Calvary's cross; as one who ardently desired the everlasting happiness of all whom he

addressed, and was solemnly convinced that they could find that happiness only in the love and service of God our Saviour, whose message of mercy he delighted to deliver in the very Spirit of his divine Master; while every sentence, every tone, every look proclaimed that he knew by his own blessed experience, that the Gospel of salvation which he preached, when cordially embraced, through the divine power of God the Holy Spirit, can impart a peace which passeth all understanding, and emphatically deserved to be called, 'good tidings of great joy.'

"This spirit of love which pervaded his preaching, equally animated his whole deportment and conversation, and seemed the very element in which he delighted to live. Of him it might with peculiar propriety be said, that 'the law of kindness dwelt upon his lips.' No one ever, I believe, heard a harsh, censorious, or uncharitable expression, even accidentally escape him. He delighted to

speak of the absent in the language of affectionate commendation; and there were few indeed in whom he could not find something to commend. If such were spoken of in his presence, and he could not with truth urge any extenuating plea on their behalf, while others censured, he was silent, and plainly marked by the expression of his benevolent countenance, that such conversation only gave him pain.

"By a singular triumph of divine grace, his humility (the peculiarly distinguishing feature of his character) seemed never in the smallest degree injured by the unbounded love of a congregation, which appreciated him *as he deserved;* by the universal esteem and affection of the Christian public, or by a popularity as a preacher, which not merely continued unabated, surviving all the attractions of novelty, through the whole course of his ministry, up to the last sermon he delivered; but seemed to be continually advancing with

his advancing years. He was indeed 'clothed with humility;' and if ever there were a minister who sought not his own glory, but exclusively that of the Lord Jesus Christ; who delighted to abase himself, and exalt the Saviour, yea, who desired to have himself entirely hidden behind the figure of his divine Master in all his pulpit ministrations, it was the meek and lowly minister of whom I speak.

"Through the special blessing of him whom he thus loved to glorify, he was preserved in those days of extravagant speculation from being ever carried away from the soundness and simplicity of 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' The precious blessings of a sound mind and a sober spirit were pre-eminently vouchsafed to him. The only change that seemed to have taken place in his views, was, that as he advanced nearer his heavenly home, more of its spirit appeared to rest on him; and consequently, the glow

of his Christian compassion became more intense, and the grasp of his Christian charity more enlarged; so that while faithfully exhibiting the glory and comfort of the doctrine of election, scripturally unfolded, (for in treating of such subjects he only ventured as far as Scripture led him by the hand,) he delighted, with the comprehensive philanthropy of a world-embracing love, to sound forth, in all their unfettered freedom, the general invitations of the Gospel, and to represent, in all the unrestricted fulness of his unbounded grace, the compassionate Redeemer of mankind, as equally willing and able to save to the uttermost, *all* (without exception, limitation, or reserve) that come unto God by him, to be washed in the fountain of his atoning blood, and clothed with the robe of his meritorious righteousness.

"It should perhaps be added, that from having observed the alarming spread of an uninfluential and unsanctifying profession of

evangelical truth in our day, his preaching had latterly assumed a more deeply practical cast, and abounded in a fuller and more frequent enforcement of the various duties of the Christian life, and exhibition of those various features of the Christian character, which shone with such mild and steady lustre in his own.

"Nor should it be forgotten that this eminent saint and servant of God was the *foremost* of that band of faithful ministers who are now preaching, not merely in the metropolis, but through every part of our native land, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ;' and many of whom first learned from his lips the preciousness and the power of the Gospel of the grace of God!

"His earthly ministry is closed—his last earthly Sabbath is past—but he has entered on the sublime services of the heavenly sanctuary, the Sabbath of the skies—and his memory lives, and shall ever live, enshrined

in the hearts of his attached friends and flock, and embalmed in the grateful affection and esteem of all to whom his ministry has been blessed.

"*How many* these have been, and *what* will be the measure of the glorious recompense of his labours of love, reserved for him in the numbers that will form his 'glory and crown of rejoicing,' cannot be fully known, till the day of the appearing of the great God our Saviour shall reveal it, to his own unspeakable joy, and his Divine Master's everlasting glory."

The following extract from a letter, which is given here, bears both on his humility and sympathy. It is written by one who acted with him as assistant chaplain at Bethesda, and remained with him until he was seized by that illness which laid him aside from public duty.

"Amongst the many highly-honoured ser-

vants of God, with whom it has been my privilege to form an acquaintance, I can truly say, that in no other instance have I observed such unaffected humbleness of mind, united with talents which commanded the attention of all who witnessed their exercise. He appeared unconscious of that peculiar power of winning eloquence, which he so abundantly possessed; and always entered the pulpit as one who threw himself exclusively on the promised aid of the Divine Comforter. In my intercourse with him, I met with invariable kindness, and the most considerate attention to every thing which might tend to my personal welfare.

"On one occasion, when God was pleased to bring me very low under a painful succession of family afflictions, dear Mr. Mathias evinced his sympathy in a way which left a deep impression on my mind. I was very unequal to the discharge of any public duty; and Mr. Mathias was restricted by his medical

advisers to the delivery of one sermon on Sunday morning. I was unable to get any person to whom the pulpit might be entrusted for the evening; and, without giving me any previous intimation of his intention, he announced at the close of his morning discourse, that he proposed to resume his subject in the evening; thus leaving me no opportunity to withstand his kindness; and this at a time, when any over-exertion might have proved most decidedly injurious to his own health. In conversing with him one day, when he was suffering under great debility, I spoke of the exceeding great and precious promises of God, as well fitted to sustain the soul in the season of greatest trouble. Mr. Mathias said—'I am very, very weak: I can only cast myself as a poor vile sinner on the love of God in Christ Jesus; and you know,' said he, with his sweet smile, '*you know I am safe there!*'"

The following tribute to departed worth, by one who knew and esteemed the venerated Mathias, and was esteemed by him, will be read with pleasure by all who valued their *sincere* friend.

"There is no duty which can devolve upon us, as men or as Christians, in the performance of which the heart is more deeply involved, than when we desire to offer the homage of affectionate respect and deep sorrow at the shrine of an honoured pastor. The best feelings of the soul stir within us on the occasion, and struggle for expression. The zeal of the teacher, the purity of the man, the vital importance of his admonitions—all stand prominently out before us. We feel how rivetted had been our attention—how commanding had been his eloquence—how untiring had been his zeal: but, alas! we also feel in how few instances we have trodden in the path so

earnestly, so affectionately pointed out to us. We wish our teacher back again—but we wish in vain.

"Never, perhaps, have these feelings been put in more active operation, than on the death of our venerated friend, the Rev. B. W. Mathias.

"Mr. Mathias was the minister of peace and truth, for very many years, at the Bethesda Chapel in Dorset-street, Dublin. His character for pulpit eloquence has been long established. No clergyman, perhaps, ever made a deeper lodgment in the minds of his hearers, than did this pious, this truly Christian man. The energy with which he proclaimed the glad tidings of peace, and the skill with which he laid bare the littleness of mere human merit, were eminently calculated to rebuke self-righteousness, and to build up faith. His whole soul lay in winning sinners to repentance; in offering hope to the depressed, comfort to the afflicted, and love

to all! No man ever made the truth appear more amiable or inviting.

"To have known him in private life was, indeed, a privilege. To have witnessed the urbanities of so chastened a spirit, to have joined in the domestic hilarity of so pure and so ardent a mind, was to have seen religion and religious influence to the utmost advantage. It was a fine and an instructive demonstration of the regenerated heart, in which the asperities of feeling and the vacillations of thought, were stilled and merged in the unruffled calmness of a renewed spirit. He was, indeed, the minister of peace, of harmony, and of love; and has left behind him an undying claim to the veneration and love of all who knew him."

The lines which are here inserted, were written by a friend, and sent by him to the family of the deceased, whom he esteemed and revered.

"ON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF THE REV. B. W. MATHIAS.

"And is the meek, the gentle spirit fled—
Bethesda's chaplain numbered with the dead?
And is *he* gone, whose soft, whose seraph voice,
Had ofttimes caused the sorrowing to rejoice?
Is he no more—whose mild, whose winning strain,
So sweetly flowed, the wanderer to reclaim?
Is he no more—whose accents breathing love
Attended were with blessings from above?
Prolonged and brilliant was the herald's race,
Therein directed by preventing grace.
From week to week he took his pulpit stand;
He grasped the standard with a giant's hand.
He lived but for that ensign to display,
And point to Jesus as 'the living way.'
And though at times an angel seemed to speak—
(His thoughts so vivid, and his words so meek.)
Though clouds of incense were around him flung;
And crowds admiring on his accents hung;
Yet 'midst those crowds, the inquiry still might be,
Who is so humble, who so meek as he?
Upon thy tomb would I *this* tribute fling;
And, honoured name, of thee thus feebly sing.
T' exalt the dead—ah such is not my aim,
(Then to his friendship must I waive my claim.)
I speak of him—that God he loudly praised,
Whose great mercy such a champion raised;
Whose ardour warm diffused throughout his breast;
And, well pleased, that champion thus addrest,
Amid my heralds, preaching peace to man,
Thou forward go. Thy station be the van.

"A. H.

"2nd June, 1841."

We are induced to bring forward here a few observations made by the subject of our memoir, as they were taken down at the time by a member of his family. The observations which are *dated*, were made, after his second attack of paralysis, in the year 1835.

A friend having mentioned an idea entertained by some—*that religion is the cause of melancholy*, he remarked—"Observe how *inconsistent* this is. All allow that heaven is the perfection of happiness; then, heaven, where we are to be perfectly happy, is, according to this idea, the perfection of melancholy!"

"Did we know this was the last Sabbath we should spend on earth, how precious would every moment of it be to us. Yet, none of us know if we ever shall see another. Ought we not, therefore, to live for eternity, which is certain, and cannot pass away?"

Some members of his family have par-

taken of the sacrament at Bethesda: he felt anxious to impress on their minds the reality of the Christian religion—the truth of the Gospel dispensation. He said—"Were I reasoning with a deist, who *would* reason, I should ask him how he could account for the sacrament of the Lord's supper, except on the ground of the truth of Christianity?

"When I go back to the commencement of this institution, I find a poor man, so completely without even the necessaries of life, that though the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, yet he had not where to lay his head; and when he had occasion for money to pay tribute to government, he was obliged to work a miracle for the small sum he required. I find this man with his twelve disciples, celebrating the Jewish passover, and after that, forming a new institution, declaring that his body should be broken, and his blood be spilt, and giving them bread and wine,

which was to be taken in commemoration of this event, which was to take place in twenty-four hours after. He was betrayed by one of these disciples, denied by another, and the rest all forsook him and fled. Yet these disciples again met together, again received the bread and wine in remembrance of their Master's death. Would they have done this, had they not been assured of his resurrection? These circumstances were recorded by profane historians, —an account of them was sent to Rome. And now, above eighteen-hundred years after, we are engaged in celebrating the same event, and are united with the earliest Christians. How can a deist account for this? *He must give up his deism.*"

"It is of the greatest importance that preachers should keep to their text. The sermon ought to be just an illustration of the passage of Scripture they have selected to preach from."

"When we consider the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and how much is to be done for the great purpose of salvation; we cannot have our minds too strongly impressed with the necessity of being deeply engaged in the eternal interests of souls."

On one occasion, some persons were speaking of the atonement made for sinners, by the sacrifice offered upon the cross; one of those who were present found great fault with the manner in which he said—this doctrine was frequently abused, as if all were equally invited to partake of it; whereas, only those who were called and chosen could have any interest in the invitation. Mr. Mathias replied—"I dare not limit the infinite merit of the sacrifice made for *all*. How can my finite mind attempt to measure infinite? I find in the word of God *all* are invited to come. Isaiah says—'Ho, *every one* that thirsteth, come ye,' &c.* And

* Isaiah lv. 1.

our Lord himself, when on earth, invited *all*, 'saying, if *any man* thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.'* The merit of that sacrifice was infinite—unbounded. But it was said—'Ye *will not* come unto me.'† Our fallen nature is *unwilling*. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'‡ And our Lord declares—'None can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.'§ We find, then, an infinite fulness in Christ: all may, and ought to be invited to come, and be saved. But until the Holy Spirit overcome the unwillingness of the natural mind to receive of the things of Christ, that invitation will be rejected, none will care for it."

"Let us beware of indecision in the way

* John vii. 37. † John v. 40.
‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14. § John vi. 44.

of religion; let not the opinion of man bias us; we are to please God, not man, except so far as we do so for his good, to lead him to God; but we must never yield one truth of our holy religion to man's opinion—this would not be for his benefit. When all the great conquerors and statesmen, who now act an important part in the world, shall have passed away, 'the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance!' Then, my dear friends, let each of us endeavour to view the things of time, accordingly as we shall value them in *eternity*."

"It is a great evil to desire to be wise above what is written in the Scriptures. Let us take the word of God simply as we find it, without adding our own imaginations. It is the Gospel preached that is to convert souls, not the imaginations of men."

"According to the sacred Scriptures, the righteousness on account of which we are accepted with God, is *entirely* out of our-

selves. It is a righteousness imputed or accounted to us. 'Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputed righteousness without works,' &c. 'Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.'* This righteousness therefore is not in us. It is a righteousness without the deeds of the law. For 'by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.'† It is 'without works.' It is a righteousness which comes by *faith*, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. 'The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.‡ It is a gift. 'They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.'"§

* Rom. iv. 6, 23, 24. † Rom iii. 20, 21. ‡ Rom iii. 22.
§ Rom. v. 17.

Some remarks were made on one occasion, respecting a practice which had become common among clergymen, viz. using *extempore* prayer in the pulpit, either before or after the sermon. Mr. Mathias remained silent, listening to all that was said on both sides of a very animated argument, which arose about the propriety or impropriety of this custom. The advocates for the practice asserted that it was not contrary to the rubric; its opponents maintained that it was. Mr. Mathias being requested to give his opinion, replied, "I believe it is not forbidden by the rubric, but I should not choose to use it myself, and should be sorry to have it become a general practice, as it might open a way to great irregularities: we have excellent prayers in our church; let us use them and be thankful."

Being asked one day, if we were not to believe that Christ was immediately present in the sacrament of the Lord's supper? he replied, "Yes; the promise is, 'where two

or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"* It was answered—"True; but that promise belongs to those who meet for the purpose of prayer only. The sacrament is a more awful and solemn service; and are we not to expect and believe that Christ is more immediately and personally present?" Mr. Mathias said, "It is a solemn service; and we should look for the manifestation of Christ's presence to our souls—but it is *spiritually* he is present. It is a spiritual blessing we should expect; and that blessing we shall receive, if we look in faith at the great sacrifice once offered for sinners."

The following observations were made by the subject of the foregoing memoir, in conversation with a member of his family, after he had been entirely laid aside from public duty:—

* Mat. xviii. 20.

2nd June.—"Oh! how insufficient are all things in this world to give happiness—every day teaches us this. Let us cleave to Christ; nothing is done except we cleave to Christ. I love to be alone, and think of the mercy of Christ!"

3rd.—"Could you read a little for me?—I cannot bear much now." The twenty-third psalm was read. He repeated—"Dwell in the house of the Lord *for ever; Laruh yemim*—for length of days." Then, raising his clasped hands, and his eyes, he said—"Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace*, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee—*peace, peace.*" He then continued—"I find it difficult to be satisfied with doing nothing for my Master—to be no longer engaged in declaring the precious gospel of Christ to sinners: but, I conclude, it is best—the Lord's will be done.'

Sunday, 7th.—The eleventh chapter of Isaiah having been read to him, it was re-

marked, that some of these prophecies have been fulfilled—the "branch from the root of Jesse" has *come*. Other of the prophecies remain still to be fulfilled. "Yes," he replied, "it is a great pity that the word of God is not taken simply—in its literal meaning; it is then a great comfort: we believe, and trust, and receive God's truth just as it is declared. It is a melancholy thing, and cause for deep regret, that many people allow their minds to be so constantly engaged on comparatively trifling subjects, instead of cultivating that holy, simple, heavenly-mindedness, that would lead them to rejoice in the great and glorious declaration of the Gospel. I do not know any commentator that has sufficiently compared one part of Scripture with another, and shown the mind of the Lord from his word." Scott was mentioned. "His commentary has many excellencies, but he fails in this too." It was asked, if it would

not require a critical knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were written, to compare them in this manner? "No; if we come to the word of God with humble minds, in the spirit of prayer, and not bringing pre-conceived opinions, but desirous to know the mind of God, we shall be led to all that is truly valuable and useful. We must be content still to be ignorant of many things."

Sunday, 14th. — Having had the sixty-sixth psalm read to him, he said, "What a beautiful psalm! how full of declarations of the Lord's faithfulness! I wish this portion of God's word were more studied: it is calculated much to increase feelings of devotion, and raise the heart above the present world and its concerns." Then, with an expression of heavenly happiness, he added, "the delight of the believer is, to hold secret communion with his God; nothing can be compared to it. Oh, the joy of feeling the presence of

an almighty God reconciled to us through our blessed Saviour!"

"It is the Christian's privilege to trust wholly on his Saviour—to find him a present help in every time of need—to go on his way rejoicing, not judging himself by what man thinks of him; but, having found a refuge in Christ, to cast all his care on him, and rejoice in his salvation. There is much want of Christian simplicity, and this prevents the believer from enjoying what is his privilege, and what alone can keep him in perfect peace."

A friend who had called one day to see him, after some conversation, said, she did not feel that she had any right to ask for temporal blessings, except such a degree of health as should keep her mind clear to hold communion with her God; he replied, he felt it to be his privilege to cast *all* his care on God, and though he dare not dictate to him, and say, such and such things he

desired to have, yet he felt assured he was allowed to commit his own and his family's temporal concerns into the hands of his Heavenly Father, with the heartfelt prayer—'*thy will be done.*'

The parable of the talents* having been read to him, he repeated, "'well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' With what pleasure, what freeness the Lord confers benefits. We do not sufficiently give him credit for this—we should ever remember he is more, *much more* willing to give us blessings, than *we* are willing to receive those blessings. 'The joy of thy Lord.' Oh, what kindness!—what love!—a love beyond imagination!—a joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

"It is a melancholy consideration, that time and thought are so much occupied by things which are passing away—that even

* Matt. xxv.

believers do not dwell more on the glories that await them when their sojourn here is over—those glories which cannot pass from them. Oh! why do we not all live more for eternity? Let us encourage Christian love—let us live with our friends while on earth, as those with whom we are to spend eternity—not knowing the moment we may be separated for time."

One day when his sermons were preparing for publication, the fifteenth in the printed collection* having been read to him, he said, "How delightful to dwell on the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ! I have felt this more of late than ever—the approbation of man—the praise of man—*all* appear to me as nothing. Divine grace is all! I should like to *spend myself* in declaring this—but it is not the will of my Heavenly Father. It will be a great

* Text—2 Cor. xiii. 14.

mercy if the Lord allow me even yet, when laid aside from preaching, to bring Divine truth before the minds of sinners by means of those sermons. Oh! how it should be our aim in every way, to endeavour to bring glory to God—to glorify his grace in health or in sickness—in active occupation, or in passive submission to his will!"

As reference has been made in a preceding chapter to the increased spirituality of mind so observable in the subject of our memoir, in consequence of the death of his daughter, it has been suggested that a brief account of her might not prove uninteresting. The details which are here given, were taken down as the various incidents which are narrated, occurred.

While we remain in this world, we have many intimations that here we have no continuing city. Happy shall we be if by these we are led, through grace, to seek "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that

fadeth not away." There is scarcely any event better calculated to bring home to our heart the conviction of the shortness and uncertainty of life, than the death of the young, the lovely, and the happy being just bursting into all that is beautiful in this complex scene. O say, does it not loudly call on all who hear of it to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth?" does it not whisper to their conscience—"Be ye also ready?"

In the hope that some, and most especially the young, may be influenced by the solemn consideration of life's uncertain tenure, and the deep necessity that exists for a serious, a *faithful* preparation for the most important event that awaits mortality—the ushering into that eternal state where man's *weal* or *woe* is finally, unalterably fixed, (in addition to the reason assigned above,)—the following pages have been drawn up. The death of his daughter proved so deeply bene-

ficial to the spirituality of her venerable parent, that we trust we shall be pardoned for introducing here a brief sketch of the short and happy life, the early and painful death, of Anna Mary Stewart Mathias.

This dear child was born on the 12th of March, 1807. Her parents received her as the gift of God, and dedicated her to him in the solemn and affecting rite of baptism as soon as possible. She was emphatically the child of many prayers. A kind friend, the Rev. Thomas Tighe, who had united her parents in the sacred bond of marriage, came to Dublin for the purpose of baptizing their child. Indeed, she seemed from her earliest infancy to have been under the peculiar care of her Heavenly Father. Her baptism was attended with deep solemnity. Her father afterwards observed, that he never felt a greater certainty of prayer being answered, than when his dear infant was dedicated to her God and Saviour—

to him who has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

As this dear child was under the immediate care of her Heavenly Father, he preserved her life until he was pleased to remove her from a world of sin to a glorious immortality. An instance of his providential care occurred when she was about six weeks' old—she was laid one day in a little cradle which was generally kept in the drawing-room; it was expected she would sleep, as she usually did, for about two hours; but hardly was she laid down, until she awoke and became uneasy to be taken up; she was scarcely out of the cradle, when a very large Bible, which had been placed awkwardly on a bracket, fell down into the very spot from which the child had been taken, and in falling broke a corner off a small table. She was preserved at this early period of her life, when had it been other-

wise ordered, no doubt she would have been immediately borne into the presence of her Saviour; she was spared for a few years to prove to other young persons, how beautiful the image of God appears in early youth.

When Anna was only a few years old, she manifested a great sense of the Divine presence, and used to feel much pleasure in prayer, asking pardon of her Heavenly Father, when guilty of any temper or disobedience. She was early taught, even before she could read, to repeat short portions of Scripture and hymns, and took much delight in them. When able to read she was very fond of Taylor's hymns for infant minds; learned many of them, and suitably applied them: a proof of this may be mentioned. One day she had done something for which her father judged it right to send her to her own room as a punishment, her mother being absent; when she returned, the dear child owned how naughty

she had been: she said, "I was very angry with papa for sending me here; I thought I hated him; but I am very sorry for it now, and prayed to God to forgive me. I have been thinking of part of a hymn I learned about pride:—

> "'Can you submissively consent
> To take reproof and punishment;
> And feel no angry temper start
> In any corner of your heart?'

"This hymn showed me I had a great deal of pride. I prayed to God to forgive me. I think he has forgiven me; and will you, mamma and papa, forgive me?" Another day she had done something wrong and had not appeared humbled on account of it; when she was about to undress at night, she said, "Shall I pray, mamma?" "Are you in a state of mind to pray, Anna?" She immediately replied, "Oh, mamma, surely I much need prayer; and will not the Lord pardon

me? he came to save sinners." At that time she was not more than five years old. Many other instances might be mentioned of the early religious feelings of this dear child, but they would too much lengthen what is only intended for a short account of one, who was very dear to her much-loved father.

It is remarkable that a child so young was much assailed by doubts of the very existence of God, and consequently of the truth of the sacred Scriptures; she was greatly agitated and made very uneasy by them. She suffered from those doubts occasionally for some years. One day she met with an argument, which from that time set all her doubts at rest on the subject, it was—*that were the Bible untrue it could not be written by good men, for they would not conspire to propagate an untruth; and it is impossible that bad men could write a book, the whole tenor of which is opposed to all their vices.*

She had often great uneasiness because

she did not love God; and with sorrow remarked, that she did not always love to read the Bible, and sometimes even disliked going to church. She was asked if she would willingly break God's commandments? she replied, "Oh no, not for a great deal; but I feel I do not love him, though he loved me so much, and is so very kind." She had the most solemn thoughts of eternity, and used to lie awake at night thinking what a wonderful thing eternity was, and how great an eternal God must be.

When about seven years old, she was observed one day at church to weep much. When spoken to about this afterwards, she replied, "I think papa showed me every secret sin of my heart. Oh I am a great sinner." This dear girl was uncommonly lively, but her great spirits never, in any instance that can be recollected, led her to act in any way unsuitable to the character of an humble, modest girl, or to hurt the

feelings of any one. As she grew up, she seemed particularly attentive to avoid giving pain, and gladly embraced every opportunity of gratifying the wishes of her friends. She might be truly said to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep." Though very lively and capable of enjoying the society of her friends, yet so completely was she devoid of selfishness, that her own amusements were never put in competition with the desire she felt to add to the comfort of those she loved. Many proofs of this might be adduced.

At one time, when Anna and her parents were staying at the house of a friend, her mother was obliged one evening to lie down on her bed: after some time Anna missed her; she left the drawing-room; her mother had fallen asleep; and when she awoke, she found the dear little girl sitting by her bed in the dark. Expressing surprise that she should leave her play-fellows, she replied, "I would

rather take care of you, mamma, when you are not well." At this time she was little more than six years old. At another time, when a blind gentleman was staying at her father's, to whom she used to read every evening, she gave up an amusement which she would have enjoyed, and which others partook of, that he might not be made to feel so much the want of sight, when he could not see what the rest were doing; and she continued her usual reading to amuse him, saying, "Poor Mr. Mitchell, he would be so much reminded of his want of sight, if he heard us all laughing at what he could not see, that I would rather stay with him and read to him, to keep him from thinking of it."

Anna was only about thirteen years of age, when the sudden and unexpected death of an aunt whom she tenderly loved, was the means of leading her more entirely to fix her affections on the joys of heaven.

Their characters were very similar. The same retiring gentleness; the same self-renunciation and willingness to take any trouble for those they loved, was observable in both: but though Anna was so much grieved by the death of her much-loved aunt, she felt greatly for the sorrow of others, and therefore did not yield to the excess of her own feelings. She observed that one of her cousins deeply mourned over the loss of his mother, that his spirits were quite sunk; and though he was older than she, yet she thought she might comfort him, and wrote him the following letter:—

"Dear W———,

"You know we *all feel* very much for you, and for my dear uncle, and the poor dear girls. You have lost a parent who was *very, very* dear to us all—to me she was a dear kind friend. Though we shall not meet her again in this world, we may all meet in

heaven. But, dear W——, should we grieve while she triumphs? Should we lament while she rejoices? Is it not a high honour that God should take her to be with himself—with him who created the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and all that is therein? If we believe in Christ Jesus, we shall all meet again in heaven—God will take us to himself. Let us follow her as she followed Christ. Now, you must not be displeased with me for writing thus to you; for you know how much I love to think of her that is gone, and of her dear children. I must now bid you adieu, as it is just ten o'clock.—Believe me your affectionate cousin,

"A. M. S. M."

It was remarked by Anna's acquaintance, that she was exceedingly modest and diffident; yet she conversed readily with strangers, and had much self-possession. A young companion expressed surprise that

she was so much at ease in company; "Why should I not," she replied; "the people are not thinking of me." This was the effect of true modesty. A friend who knew her well observed, that he had never seen so much decision and gentleness united in one so young: this remark was made while she taught at Dispensary-lane school. She had wished to do so when she was about fourteen years of age, being desirous, as she said, to instruct little children in the Scripture-truths which she had learned; but she soon retired from this school, and collected a few little girls to teach at home, for she remarked that many people came there, and she would rather be more private.

From some of Anna's papers found after her death, there are a few extracts made to show the spiritual state of mind of this dear child. "I found yesterday the great use of

prayer;* while I was at business I felt idle and lazy, and I knew that I could not learn my lessons if I did not attend. I prayed to God to make me attentive—he did so; and I knew all my lessons. To-day I did the same, and found the same effect."

Monday.—"This day my dear papa left us to go to the north;† may God prosper him and bring him home in safety. Oh, that God would take all vanity out of my heart and make me humble."

October 8, 1820.—"I have read this night the order for the burial of the dead. I have a sorrowful pleasure in reading it. My happiest time in the twenty-four hours is

* She was in the habit of retiring for prayer generally, at least, three times a day. Frequently, after having spent some time in her own room, she has come to her mother, and with a sorrowful expression, said, "Mamma, I cannot pray." She was not satisfied with the mere form of prayer, and seldom ceased offering up petitions to her Heavenly Father, until her heart was softened under a sense of sin, and of a Saviour's love.

† On a deputation from the Bible Society.

while I am engaged in reading my Bible or some other good book. After I retire to my room at night, I enjoy that quiet which I cannot have at other times. Oh, my God, make me just what I ought to be. I feel that my wicked heart falls into the least temptation, and that I am too prone to speak of others in a manner that I should not like them to speak of me. Oh, Heavenly Father, make me humble, I pray thee, for the sake of thy dear Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." At the time this was written, Anna was only about thirteen years of age; and never was any young creature less inclined to the faults of which she seemed so sensible. She was very lively and playful, but never seemed to neglect to do to others as she would they should do to her.

Anna's love for her Saviour, and her desire to have souls brought to Christ, made her anxious to promote any plan proposed

for the increase of true religion—as far as a very young and modest girl could. She therefore engaged some of her young acquaintances to join her in forming juvenile societies—auxiliary to the parent societies. She had one for the "Tract Society"—one for the "Floating Chapel for Sailors:" she formed another, which she called, the "Christianized Jew's Society;" and collected with a good deal of success for the "Naval and Military Bible Society." It was her *delight* to be of use to her fellow-creatures and to promote the glory of God; so much was this the case, that when her brothers and sisters, shortly after her death, heard a lady complain of the trouble she had in attending to some of the religious institutions, they said, "Oh! how different from dear Anna: *that* used to be her play." She was remarkable for making use of every moment of time—and always had a book or work ready to take up, if obliged

to wait a few minutes for any thing: by this means she gained more knowledge in less time, than most others at her age.

One feature very strongly marked in Anna's character was, the most complete, childlike confidence. She had not the smallest tincture of jealousy, and never doubted the affections of her friends. This was also the character of her religion; she trusted her Heavenly Father with entire dependence on his promises. The promise, "the meek shall inherit the earth," was fully realized to her. Her humility gave her such a sense of unworthiness, that every enjoyment was cause for thankfulness with her. She used to say, "she had a pleasure which she could not have, were her papa rich; for when obliged to make a contrivance to procure any little comfort or convenience, she enjoyed it more than if she could have it at once without trouble." One day, when conversing with a young friend on

the prospect of meeting those they both loved in heaven, her friend said, "If we be worthy, I trust we shall." "Worthy," said Anna, "that *we* never can be, but for Christ's sake we shall be accepted; *his worthiness* shall be ours." She used frequently to say, "let us beware of appearing better than we are—we cannot be too much afraid of professing what we do not feel."

When about fifteen years of age, Anna undertook the education of her little sister, for which she was fully competent, as her mind was highly cultivated. But it pleased her Heavenly Father to take her to himself before she was able to attend long to an occupation in which she delighted. He was daily preparing her for that glorious change which she was soon to experience. Night and day her thoughts were fixed on her Saviour. One night when her mother went into her room, after her dear child

was in bed, she found her lying awake. "Oh! mamma," said Anna, "if you are not busy, will you read to me a little?" "What shall I read, my dear?" "The eleventh chapter of Isaiah, if you please. I love it because there is so much of my Saviour in it." Another night, when her mother went into her room, she found the dear little girl in tears; the wind was high: Anna said, "Mamma, I cannot tell you what I have felt in thinking of the many nights my dear Saviour was exposed to storms and tempests—yet, he had not where to lay his head, and here am I with every comfort. Oh! what a dear Saviour is Jesus!"

The last day Anna spent from home was with a kind friend who lodged near Bootersstown. At dinner the lady of the house remarked to her father, that if any one might be vain of a child, he had reason to be so. One present, overhearing this observation,

thought—*surely she is a lovely creature!* But only one week elapsed before that lovely girl was laid on a bed, from whence she never rose again. That day, however, had been a day of enjoyment to her. The following letter, written to one of the young people of the family with whom she had spent it, affords a proof of this:—

"My dear Miss S——r,

"Will you give the enclosed paper to Miss C——? it contains the hymn-words which I promised to write out for her. You cannot think how happy I was yesterday with Miss Cheyne* and Miss S——n. I felt as if we were all sisters in our *dear, dear Redeemer.* Oh, what a beautiful hymn that is which begins, 'Grace, 'tis a charming sound.' I hope I may continue in the Lord.

* The eldest daughter of the late Dr. Cheyne. She died shortly after her young friend.

" ' 'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord or no—
Am I his, or am I not?'

" I feel I do not love my Lord as I ought. I wish, if you had time, you would be so kind as to answer this. Tell me how I may love him more, and serve him better. What a delightful hymn it is which begins—' Come, my soul, thy suit prepare!' And also—' Far from the world, O Lord, I flee!' These are sweet hymns. But I never feel so happy as when by myself I can read my Bible—

" ' Precious Bible! what a treasure
Does the Word of God afford!'

" I have got a few new tracts. Perhaps you might like to have them to lend to the servants; I will therefore send them with this.

" Will you remember me to all my friends? but, above all, remember me in your prayers

at the throne of grace, before the Friend of sinners; and believe me ever your affectionate

"A. M. S. M."

On the 28th of August, 1822, Mr. Mathias left his family to go to Cheltenham for the recovery of his health. Anna continued to watch the carriage which conveyed her much-loved parent away, as long as she could see it. Little did either father or daughter imagine, when they parted, how distressing would be the next meeting. On the 29th, this dear child complained of a chilly feeling and head-ache; yet she would not give up her usual studies; but prepared a Hebrew lesson for a friend who came to instruct her, saying—"When Mr. S—— is so kind as to come and teach me, shall I appear to neglect him?" But the day after, she was unable to rise; and a kind medical friend who came to see her, pronounced she had fever. Though she did not in the least apprehend that her illness

was dangerous, yet she was very anxious about her acceptance with God. She said—"O, I wish I could be quite sure my Saviour loves me." When she was asked, if he did not come to save sinners, she quickly replied—"O yes, Jesus *is* the Saviour of sinners!" Even while suffering from fever, she was anxious for the happiness of others; and was particularly interested about a servant who attended her. One day, she said to her mother, "Mamma, I am greatly grieved about poor Nancy. I have been trying to convince her that we can have no merit in God's sight; no good works to recommend us to him; that only Jesus can merit; that he alone can save us—but she will not believe this: I am very sorry for her." To exalt the Saviour, and bring the knowledge of salvation to sinners, seem ever to have been her greatest and most constant delight.

As the fever increased, she became very restless; but if any of the precious promises of the

Gospel were repeated to her, she would reply—"O, that is pleasant," and remain happy and tranquil. One day she felt much distressed, because, as she said, strange thoughts of God came into her mind, and she feared her Heavenly Father's displeasure on account of them. When told they were temptations from Satan, she seemed to be satisfied, and spoke much of the goodness of God to her. Not a murmur ever escaped her lips: her lovely countenance always expressed calm delight. Another day she said, "'How merciful God is! long-suffering and gracious!' These are the words of Isaiah. O, what a beautiful book Isaiah is—there is so much of Jesus Christ in it!" At one time, her mother coming quietly into the room, observed that Anna seemed greatly occupied with her own thoughts. When the dear child perceived her, she said, "I have been wishing much that all physicians were Christians. I wonder how they can be thoughtless and careless

about religion, when they see the power of God in the formation of the human frame, and observe the many instances of his mercy to poor sinners. Well, dear Doctor J—— is a Christian." Just as she awoke from a sleep one evening, she said, "Jesus Christ is watching over me: he is kind—he is precious—O, how precious!" Often she used to say, while a heavenly smile rested on her lovely features, "My dear, my *precious Saviour!*" Cowper's hymn—"God of my life,"* &c., was a great favourite with her. It was the last she was able to repeat: she did so with much feeling, laying a particular emphasis on the third and fourth verses.

In sickness as in health, her mind was continually occupied, either with thoughts of the goodness and love of God, or with plans for the benefit of those whom she thought were in want of spiritual or tem-

* Olney Hymn-book.

poral good. Some kind friends who were much with Anna, witnessed the heavenly state of her mind, and bore testimony to it. After any one had prayed with her she always added with great feeling and emphasis, "Amen and amen: she often awoke praying. One day she was heard to pray with much fervour, that *Jews and Gentiles, and all the world might be brought to know her dear Redeemer*. The words, "*my dear Redeemer*," were pronounced with such an appropriating emphasis, that all who heard her must have been fully convinced he was indeed *her* Redeemer.

She was frequently observed as if seeing beyond the present view of things, and then she would say in the sweetest and most fervent manner, "My precious, *precious* Saviour," resting particularly on the repetition of the word *precious*; her whole countenance glowing with delight, as if she really felt the presence of him she so much loved. On

awakening from a short sleep, she, for the last time on earth, attempted to sing. Her voice faultered, but the words were distinctly heard. They were from the first hymn in the *old* Bethesda collection. It happened that no one was in the room at the time she commenced; but as her mother entered, she heard the following words applied by her dear child to herself:—

> "Bless the precious Saviour's name
> Through whom this grace is given;
> Who bore the curse to sinners due,
> Who formed *my* ruined soul anew,
> And made *me* heir of heaven."

Another time on awakening, she was heard to say, "guardian angels are watching over me;" at another, "my precious Saviour guards me."

Her prayers were often such as to cast a solemn awe on those who heard them. She would address God as feeling in his immediate presence; her mind abstracted from all around

her, and her eyes fixed as if she spoke to one she saw; then in a solemn tone she would say, "O, thou great and holy one, who inhabitest eternity, who dwellest in the highest heaven, thou art great, thou art glorious;" then, with a sweet smile, she would add—"thou art my precious, *precious* Saviour." At one time she said, "Mamma, I have been thinking over my past life, and should like to confess all my sins and follies, and tell you of many wrong things I have done." It was feared this might agitate her too much, and she was reminded that all were fully pardoned for the sake of her Saviour. She replied, "Oh yes, my dear, my *precious* Saviour." When suffering pain it was said to her—"Jesus will comfort you, for he loves you." "Oh yes," she replied, "he loved me before I loved him, he died for me before I loved him—I love him because he first loved me." A moment's pause ensued—she then distinctly said:

"Hark, my soul, it is the Lord,
'Tis my Saviour, hear his word,
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?"

After another pause for breath, the dear sufferer continued—

"Sought me wandering—set me right,
Turned my darkness into light."

When the fever was highest and her mind wandering, the name of "Jesus" sounding on her ear, immediately recalled her recollection.

The fever continued without abating for nearly thirty days; but then Anna became more collected. Her father returned from Cheltenham on the 30th of September, 1822: and, as he came near home, was first informed of the danger of his beloved daughter. He was greatly affected; but after a little time was able to visit her. She rejoiced again to meet a parent so dear to her: he informed her of some things connected with the increase of the Gospel: among others, what he knew would delight her—the progress making in

the preparation of the floating chapel for sailors. She received the intelligence with much pleasure; and her father, after some time, left her, promising to return shortly, and give her more information on the subject. But before he next saw her, her happy spirit had fled to mansions of eternal bliss, there to live for ever in the presence of her God and Saviour, whom, while on earth, it had been her delight to glorify, and before whom she then cast her crown rejoicing. Her dear father collected his family around the bed on which the corpse of his much-loved child lay, and, in great agitation, yet with entire resignation to the will of his Heavenly Master, returned fervent and heartfelt thanks, that one dear child was safe from sin and sorrow, and had entered into eternal joy, while he earnestly offered up his remaining children to Him who had been the friend and protector of their dear departed sister, even from her infancy.

POSTSCRIPT.

The affectionate respect and esteem in which the reverend subject of our memoir was held, was evinced by the kind determination of his friends and former congregation, to perpetuate his memory by the erection of a tablet in Bethesda chapel, and also, by a monument in the cemetery of Mount Jerome, where his mortal remains are deposited.

The following resolutions were entered into for the furtherance of the above object:

At a meeting of the friends of the late Rev. B. W Mathias, held in the vestry-room of Bethesda chapel, 10th June, 1841,

P. E. Singer, Esq. in the chair,

It was resolved, that in order to evidence and perpetuate our sincere regard for the memory of one whose labours have been so extensively blessed, and more especially within the walls of Bethesda, it would seem that the most enduring mode would be the erecting of a testimonial in Bethesda chapel, as also in the cemetery of Mount Jerome, where he lies interred.

Resolved—that a provisional committee, consisting of the following clergymen and gentlemen, be appointed to carry the foregoing into effect, and that they be empowered to call a general meeting of the subscribers, finally to determine on the testimonial as soon as they may consider it expedient so to do.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

Rev. W. Atthill	Major Crawford
— R. Daly	Arthur Guinness, Esq.
— D. Browne	George Gray, Esq.
— W. S. Guinness	James M'Cullagh, Esq.
— John Gregg	James Hawkins, Esq.
— W. H. Krause, chaplain	W. Mills, Esq.
— J. P. Sargent	Robert Warren, Esq.
P. E. Singer, Esq.	John Hunter, Esq.

Secretary, J. G. Strickland, Esq.

Resolved—That a drawing of the tablet erected in Bethesda chapel, be presented to Mrs. Mathias by this committee.

J. G. Strickland, Sec.

An engraving of the tablet constitutes the frontispiece of this work.

THE END.

DUBLIN
PRINTED BY J. S. FOLDS, SON, AND PATTON,
5, Bachelor's-walk